THE BIBLE FOR HOME & SCHOOL

ISAIAH

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FOR HOME AND SCHOOL

MATHEWS, GENERAL EDITOR

HISTORICAL AND COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

BOOK OF THE
ECIES OF ISAIAH

EDGAR McFADYEN

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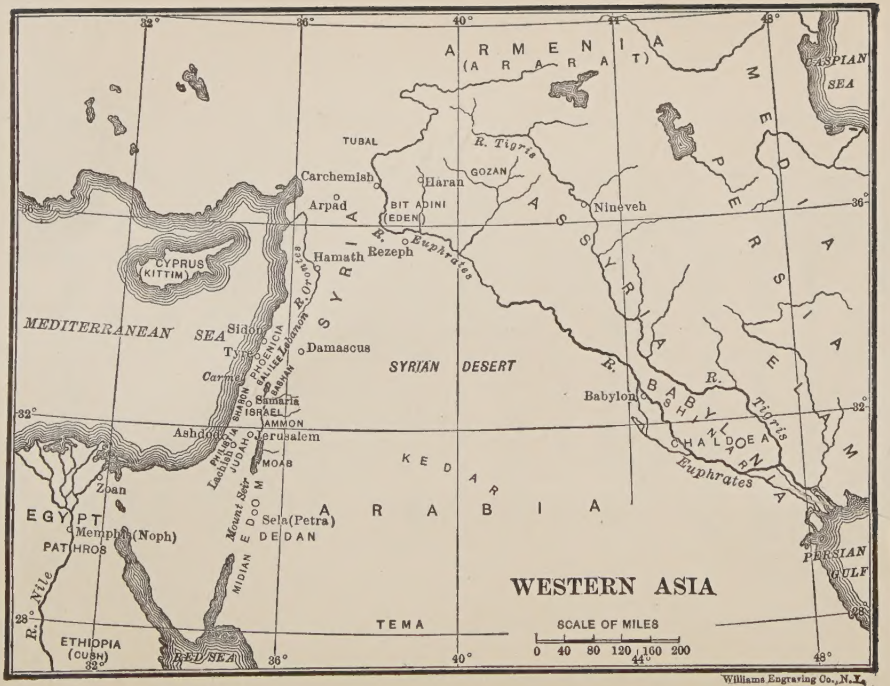

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THE BOOK OF THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

BY

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Isaiah
(title)

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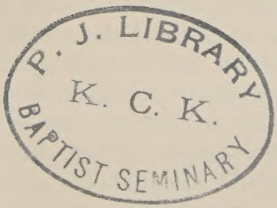

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Bible for Home and School is intended to place the results of the best modern biblical scholarship at the disposal of the general reader. It does not seek to duplicate other commentaries to which the student must turn. Its chief characteristics are (*a*) its rigid exclusion of all *processes*, both critical and exegetical, from its notes; (*b*) its presupposition and its use of the assured results of historical investigation and criticism wherever such results throw light on the biblical text; (*c*) its running analysis both in text and comment; (*d*) its brief explanatory notes adapted to the rapid reader; (*e*) its thorough but brief Introductions; (*f*) its use of the Revised Version of 1881, supplemented with all important renderings in other versions.

Biblical science has progressed rapidly during the past few years, but the reader still lacks a brief, comprehensive commentary that shall extend to him in usable form material now at the disposition of the student. It is hoped that in this series the needs of intelligent Sunday School teachers have been met, as well as those of clergymen and lay readers, and that in scope, purpose, and loyalty to the Scriptures as a foundation of Christian thought and life, its volumes will stimulate the intelligent use of the Bible in the home and the school.

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PREFACE

The textual, critical, and historical problems of the book of Isaiah are very numerous; and this volume, which has been obliged to consult brevity at every point, has been able to do little more than record results without the processes which justify them. Frequently the data are so slender and capable of so various interpretations that those results are very far from certain. Where — as not infrequently in Isaiah — two scholars, adopting the same critical methods, differ by half a millennium in their estimate of the date of a passage, we are clearly yet a long way from unanimity.

But, in face of this regrettable uncertainty, two things have to be said. First, there is much that is practically certain: few to-day, for example, doubt the exilic origin of chapters 40–55. And secondly, on any view of the origin of the book, it is literature and it is religion. Within the limits prescribed by the editor of the series, I have endeavored to do justice to both these aspects of it. Though the subject of Hebrew metre swarms with unsolved problems, it seemed worth while, following recent scholars, to attempt a metrical arrangement of the book. There can be little doubt that this encourages an appreciation of its literary quality and helps us to feel that much of Hebrew prophecy is poetic not only in spirit and substance, but in form as well. Naturally the terseness and symmetry of a Hebrew verse are sometimes gravely obscured

by the English translation, which may render two Hebrew words by eleven (cf. 61 : 11), or even by thirteen (cf. 5 : 2) English words. It is further obscured by an occasional omission (cf. 37 : 25), or more frequently interpolation of words (cf. 7 : 18b) or even of lines (cf. 22 : 9–11; 59 : 18c). When, however, allowance is made for these intrusions, which are sometimes plain enough in the metrically arranged text, and are usually noted in the commentary, we cannot but recognize that in the book of Isaiah poetry no less than prophecy has attained some of its noblest flights.

But the supreme interest of the Bible must ever be the religious interest; and any worthy study of the book of Isaiah ought to carry us not only into the history of those far-off days, but into the soul of the prophet himself and of those others — great, too, though less majestic than he — whose words are embodied in his book. This is what, in brief compass, I have tried to do — to show how for these men the worship of God involved the service of man, and how their hearts were kept steady and hopeful in the face of disappointment and disaster by their faith in God and his eternal purpose.

JOHN E. McFADYEN.

Lake of Bays,
Ontario, 5th August, 1910.

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THE BOOK OF THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

JOHN EDGAR McFADYEN

INTRODUCTION

I. Origin and Arrangement of the Book of Isaiah

In the middle of the book of Isaiah, as it has come down to us, occurs a purely narrative and historical section, consisting of four chapters (36–39) — written for the most part in prose — dealing with Isaiah's conduct during the blockade of Jerusalem by the Assyrians and with his relations to King Hezekiah, and having all the appearance of being an excerpt from a biography of the prophet. This simple fact furnishes, to begin with, three great divisions of the book: Chaps. 1–35; Chaps. 36–39; Chaps. 40–66. With the third division, which readily lends itself to subdivision, we shall deal more explicitly later.

It is easy to show that the first division (Chaps. 1–35) ultimately rests upon smaller groups, at least some of which must have been circulated independently. This superscription — "the vision, or word, or oracle, *of Isaiah the son of Amoz*" — occurs at the beginning of Chaps. 1, 2, and 13. Such a repetition would have been unnecessary and unnatural, had all the prophecies originally appeared together as one whole: nothing would in that case have been necessary but the superscription at the beginning of the book. Therefore we are justified in regarding Chaps. 1 (or 2)–12 as a group by itself.

It is natural to take as the second group Chaps. 13–23. These chapters, in addition to their special superscription, are held together in two ways: (1) by the fact that almost every oracle in the entire group deals with foreign peoples, for example, Babylon, Moab, Egypt, Tyre; and (2) by the word *burden* (or rather *oracle, utterance*) which heads most of these oracles (cf. Chaps. 13, 15, 17, 19, etc.).

Another group is constituted by Chaps. 28–33, in which all the chapters but one[1] begin with *Woe*, and it is no accident that these chapters deal with a single period (704–701 B.C.) and, in the main, with a single theme, the projected assault of the Assyrians upon Judah, and Judah's endeavor to negotiate an Egyptian alliance. The remaining oracles on both sides of this group further constitute two groups by themselves: Chaps. 24–27, a great picture of the convulsion of the world, following not inappropriately the oracles upon the heathen nations; and Chaps. 34 and 35, describing the destruction of Edom and of all the nations opposed to Judah, with the great golden age which should follow.

The first half, then, of the book of Isaiah divides itself naturally as follows:

Chaps. 1–12; Chaps. 13–23; Chaps. 24–27; Chaps. 28–33; Chaps. 34, 35; Chaps. 36–39.

The history of the ultimate origin of these groups and of their subsequent association into a connected whole must, in the nature of the case, be largely conjectural. What is certain is that the figure of the great prophet and his genuine oracles began to gather upon themselves, not long after his death, the eager and reverent attention of his countrymen, who, in later ages, incorporated in his book the work of other hands, sometimes inferior but often akin, in spirit and literary power, to Isaiah's own. This process of amplification went on till at least the fourth century B.C. (Chaps. 24–27). But the original oracles of Isaiah are undoubtedly to be found most of all in the first and fourth groups — Chaps. 1–12 and 28–33.

II. The Political Conditions of Isaiah's Time

Throughout the whole of Isaiah's career, and indeed for nearly a hundred years after, the background of Hebrew history was Assyria. The presence of that mighty empire

[1] Chap. 32 begins with *behold*, which is not unlike *woe* in the Hebrew.

is always felt — at first as a shadow, but very soon as a powerful hand, laid not only upon Israel and Judah, but upon all the little kingdoms of the west, the Syrians (or Aramæans), the Phœnicians, the Philistines, and others. Most of the prophecies of Isaiah have Assyria in view, and are fully intelligible only as the influence of that power upon the fortunes and policy of Judah is understood.

In 745 B.C., five years before Isaiah's call, Tiglath Pileser ascended the throne of Assyria, and soon thereafter his heavy hand began to be felt in the west. Some Syrian towns were taken. In 738 B.C. Assyria came into direct contact with Israel. For half a century Israel under Jeroboam II and Judah under Uzziah had been relatively free from war, and were enjoying great prosperity. But during this period were developed also those evils which too frequently accompany prosperity, and towards the end of it political and social life in Israel was in a state of dissolution, bordering on anarchy. All this is vividly reflected in the sorrowful pages of Hosea. Significantly enough we are told that Menahem, now king of Israel (738 B.C.), "gave Pul (*i.e.* Tiglath Pileser) a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand" (2 Kings 15 : 19). In other words, Israel is now definitely a vassal of Assyria.

In all this Judah was not involved. For over two hundred years she and Israel had gone their separate ways, sometimes even being involved in open hostility, so that Israel's submission to Assyria was quite consistent with the independence of Judah. This independence, however, was not to last long. The western kingdoms, always restive under the yoke of Assyria, were ready to throw it off at the first opportunity. We hear in 735 of an assault upon Judah by the combined forces of Israel and Syria or Aram (Isa. 7 : 1 ; 2 Kings 16 : 5). In the Old Testament no motive is assigned for this, but it has been very plausibly assumed that the object of the attacking powers was to coerce Judah into a coalition of western states against

Assyria. Individually, they were helpless against the mighty power which dealt with weaker peoples like a boy harrying a bird's nest (Isa. 10 : 14) ; their only hope lay in combination : and the defection of so important a state as Judah, situated midway between Syria and Israel on the north and Philistia on the south, would have been fatal. Thrown into consternation by the invasion, Ahaz, contrary to the advice of Isaiah (7 : 4), took the fatal step of appealing for help to Assyria (2 Kings 16 : 7). This gave Tiglath Pileser just the opportunity he wanted. He came west, ravaged the districts of northern Israel (734 B.C., 2 Kings 15 : 29), and took Damascus, the capital of Aram, in 732 B.C. Judah for the moment was delivered from her distress, but the price she paid was a heavy one: she too became henceforth a tributary and vassal of Assyria. This is the period which forms the background of Chaps. 7 and 8.

The death of the Assyrian monarch was always the signal for a revolt in the west ; and on the death of Tiglath Pileser in 727, Hosea, king of Israel and vassal of Assyria, trusting to Egypt — that other great power, which vividly impressed the imagination and raised the hopes of the Hebrews of those days — threw off the yoke of Assyria. In 724 Shalmaneser IV, the new monarch, appeared in the west, and began the siege of Israel's capital, Samaria, which, however, was only taken after three years by Shalmaneser's general and successor, Sargon, in 721 B.C. Over 27,000 of her people were carried into captivity, and, politically, Israel was extinguished. Isaiah's prophetic words were justified. He had anticipated the fall of Samaria (28 : 1–4) as of Damascus (17 : 1 ff., cf. 7 : 16 ; 8 : 4).

The next incident of importance that meets us on the pages of Isaiah is the siege and capture of Ashdod by the Assyrians in 711 B.C. (Chap. 20). Philistia (to which Ashdod belonged), and other western states, taking advantage of difficulties in which Sargon was at this time being involved in the far east, revolted. Judah is men-

tioned as among the rebels, but probably she ultimately withdrew from the confederacy. At any rate — and this was no doubt due to the influence of Isaiah's earnest warnings — Judah for thirty years (from 735 B.C.) kept from an open rupture with Assyria, though there must always have been a would-be patriotic party in favor of such a policy.

The death of Sargon in 705, however, like the death of his predecessors, was the signal for a general revolt throughout the west, and this time Judah was tempted to join. Negotiations were set on foot with Egypt, the country of large promise and slender performance (30 : 5, 7 ; 31 : 1 ff.), and the hopes of the west were high. But they had reckoned without their host. The terrible Sargon was succeeded by the more terrible Sennacherib (? 14 : 29), who, after extinguishing the flame of insurrection in the east, turned his steps towards the rebellious states in the west in 701. Most of Phoenicia in the north was swiftly reduced; thence Sennacherib passed to Philistia in the south, defeated at Eltekeh near Ekron a force of Egyptians and Arabs, and besieged and took Ekron, one of the Philistine cities. He was now free to begin his assault upon Judah.

We have the great good fortune to possess a tolerably detailed account of this campaign both from Hebrew and Assyrian sources. The Hebrew account is contained in Isaiah, Chaps. 36 and 37, which corresponds with slight variations to 2 Kings 18 : 13, 17–19 : 37, the latter account being preceded by the very valuable fragment 18 : 14–16. The vivid words of Sennacherib reveal the thoroughness with which the devastating campaign was prosecuted in Judah. "Hezekiah of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, I besieged forty-six of his strong cities, fortresses, and small places in their neighborhood and took them. Two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty men and women, horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen and sheep without number, I carried off from them and counted as spoil. . . . Himself I shut up like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem

his royal city." But though Judah suffered so terribly and Jerusalem was blockaded so closely that her king could be compared to a bird in a cage, the city itself was not captured. Addicted as the Assyrian monarchs are to boasting, yet Sennacherib does not even claim to have taken the city, and we may be very sure that the city was not taken. Thus by a miraculous Providence Isaiah's great prophecy was vindicated that Jehovah of Hosts would defend the city whose temple was his earthly home.

III. Moral and Social Conditions of Isaiah's Time

As Isaiah was called to the prophetic office in the year of Uzziah's death (740 B.C., Chap. 6) none of his oracles comes from the period of Uzziah; but something of the splendor of that monarch's long and brilliant reign is reflected from the earlier prophecies of Isaiah. Judah was still strong, well fortified (2 : 15), and abundantly equipped with the resources of war (2 : 7). By the capture of the port of Elath (2 Kings 14 : 22), Uzziah had carried the trade of Judah to the Red Sea, and, by means of his ships (Isa. 2 : 16), no doubt far beyond its northern shores. This trade brought silver and gold in abundance to Judah (2 : 7); the wealth in turn developed a spirit of pride (2 : 12 ff.) and materialism, and created in those who possessed it a cruel and unscrupulous temper. The poor were ground to the dust (3 : 14 f.); their property was gradually appropriated by the rich, who added field to field and house to house (5 : 8). Among the upper classes drunkenness and revelry became the order of the day (5 : 11 f., 22). They were a jubilant people (5 : 14) — jubilant even in a desperate crisis to the point of an almost blasphemous frivolity (22 : 2, 12 f.). The women had cast off the restraints with which Oriental women were wont to hedge themselves about, and with haughty head and leering eyes and tinkling feet they walked the fashionable streets of Jerusalem (3 : 16–4 : 1).

Little wonder that in a society like this moral distinctions had lost their meaning, and the moral order was flouted. Good was evil and evil good (5 : 20). The religious leaders, so far from stemming this tide of corruption, were themselves the foremost in depravity. Within the very precincts of the temple, the prophets and priests would become brutally intoxicated, and scenes were enacted indescribably disgusting (28 : 7 ff.). These men, who most of all should have lent an intelligent and sympathetic ear to the solemn warnings of Isaiah, derided him and his message in a drunken parody (28 : 9 f.). With the exception of a few faithful souls like the disciples whom Isaiah gathered about him (8 : 16), the people and their leader alike had abandoned all faith in the spiritual power that governs the world. Their motto was, "Don't bother us with your holy One of Israel" (30 : 11). Avarice and debauchery, scepticism (5 : 19) and mockery, were the prevalent tempers of the day among those who should have been leaders, but who, as Isaiah says, were really misleaders (3 : 12). They were in reality rebels against the God of Israel and his holy law (1 : 2).

But to us the strange thing is that these were religious men — destitute indeed of the elements of morality, yet passionately religious. Unlike the prophet's religion, however, theirs was not only expressed, but exhausted, in ritual. They drew near to God, not with their hearts, but only with their lips (29 : 13). And yet not with their lips only, but with elaborate and costly ritual service as well. Zealously they thronged his courts at the great festivals, and though their hands were stained with blood (1 : 15), they were not empty. Rams, bullocks, lambs, goats — all these were offered with enthusiasm and devotion (1 : 11 ff.), which may have sometimes been born of despair ;[1] but the spoil of the poor was in the houses from which they came to the worship of their God (3 : 14), and their bloody hands, as the prophet reminds them,

[1] If Chap. 1 comes, as the bulk of it may, from Sennacherib's invasion.

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would therefore be stretched out to him in vain (1 : 15). For it was not their cattle, but their lives that he wanted — worship which came out of pure and humble hearts (29 : 13) and which expressed itself in an honorable civic life, in social justice, and in practical pity for the defenceless and the poor (1 : 17). Theirs was a God who looked not for holocausts, but for justice; for service indeed, but for moral and social rather than ritual service. "He looked for *justice*, but, behold, oppression; for *righteousness*, but, behold, a cry" (5 : 7).

IV. Isaiah the Man

Whether we regard it on its political or on its social side, the task which Isaiah had to face was as hard as ever fell to the lot of mortal. Grave political problems had arisen with the intrusion of Assyria; while the social life of Judah, as we have seen, was honeycombed with pride, superstition (2 : 6; 8 : 19), materialism, and frivolity. Yet throughout it all, the soul of Isaiah remained serene and steady, because his eyes had seen the King, Jehovah of hosts (6 : 5).

The fine consistency of his policy and the quiet confidence with which he confronted even the most desperate crises are explained by the great vision with which he was launched upon his prophetic career (Chap. 6). Then it was given him to see the glorious Lord upon his throne, high and lifted up; and from that day to the end, he bore the vision on his heart. Whatever else he might see, he also saw the Lord, even in dark days when no other eyes in Judah could see him. His glorious presence and his invincible purpose were to Isaiah the most real things in the world. In this sense he is preëminently the prophet of faith. In individual life, in national history, God is the most potent factor, — in the last analysis, the only potent factor, however completely he might be ignored or, in practice, denied by scheming politicians and their

frivolous people. The deepest folly in a military crisis is to look only to the armory and ignore God (22 : 8–11). When, in the invasion of Judah by the confederate forces of Aram and Israel, the hearts of the king and his people were shaken like the forest trees before the wind (7 : 2), Isaiah's heart is calm — the only steady heart in Judah — because his eyes had seen the King. Behind all the perplexities and confusions his faith pierced to the great immovable Reality, the sublime spiritual Presence whose glory fills the universe (6 : 3) ; to that mighty Purpose which embraces the whole world, and which no human power can ultimately thwart or annul (14 : 26 f.). Politicians might think themselves very astute, but *he also is wise,* as Isaiah trenchantly says (31 : 2). He has his great world-plan ; and, whatever else miscarries, that is triumphant.

It is this clear and steady vision of God, this unshaken faith in his abiding presence and in the triumph of his purpose, that explains the political conduct of Isaiah, and justifies its seeming inconsistency. In his earlier ministry he had passionately sought to dissuade Judah from forming an alliance with Assyria (7 : 4); towards the close of his career he is equally insistent that that alliance be maintained, and that no attempt be made to negotiate with Egypt (30 : 1 f. ; 31 : 1). In both cases his advice must have seemed madness to the worldly-wise politicians. It is small wonder that Ahaz, menaced by the confederate troops of the two nations to the north of him, should have sought to secure his safety by the help of the mighty Assyrians ; or that, thirty years afterwards, the patriotic politicians, eager to take advantage of the difficulties of Assyria, should have sought the aid of Egypt. Significantly enough, these are the two occasions on which Isaiah seems to have been moved to peculiar indignation by the rejection of his policy. Ahaz's repudiation of his advice to "keep quiet and fear not" (7 : 4) he describes in passionate words as a rejection and a provocation of

God himself (7 : 13); and on the political schemers who tried to negotiate a secret alliance with Egypt he denounces a *Woe* (30 : 1; 31 : 1). Guthe has said that a politician of our day would have regarded his advice to Ahaz as at once idle and ridiculous; and, on the basis of it, some have maintained that, though Isaiah may have been a mighty man of faith, he was in no sense a statesman. But, as a matter of fact, even from a purely political point of view, Isaiah's judgment was the truest wisdom after all. Aram and Israel, had they been even more powerful than they were, — Isaiah contemptuously calls them the "tails of smoking fire-brands" (7 : 4), — would in any case, even without the appeal of Ahaz, very soon have been crushed by Assyria, who, for good reasons of her own, would not have tolerated the rise of a powerful confederacy in the west; and as for Egypt, the folly of relying upon her had been demonstrated over and over again. Always ready to promise, seldom willing or able to perform — such was her reputation far beyond her own borders; even the Assyrian Sargon, in 711, incidentally alludes to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, as "a prince who could not save."

Isaiah's faith in God turned out to be the truest political wisdom. On his view of the world, God alone was worthy of fear (8 : 13) — not Aram or Israel, not Egypt or Assyria, no force in the universe but God himself. For as the world is resplendent with his glory (6 : 3) and the arena of his purpose, so history is nothing but the gradual evolution of that purpose, and every earthly power is but his tool which, willingly or unwillingly, must become contributory to its accomplishment. The Assyrian may proudly work his cruel and terrible will upon the weaker nations of the world (10 : 7 ff.); but in reality he is nothing but a tool in Jehovah's hand, an instrument with which his holy omnipotent will is done (10 : 5): and he too, when he has played his predetermined part, will one day, for his pride and cruelty, be shattered by the Arm that is infinitely mightier than his own (10 : 33 f.). Doubtless

the event did not always happen at the moment or in the manner Isaiah had anticipated. Samaria fell a decade or so later than he seems at one time to have expected (8 : 4); and the might of Assyria was not shattered upon the hills of Judah (14 : 25). But in every essential feature the forecast of Isaiah was justified. Samaria did fall, and Assyria did retire from Judah, her purpose unaccomplished.

These marvellous forecasts were no accident; they came from the prophet's intimate communion with his God (Amos 3 : 7), and from his clear appreciation of and whole-hearted devotion to the divine purpose which stood clear before his purged eyes. It was this that enabled him to announce the security of Jerusalem when, beleaguered as she was by Assyria, the prospects of her deliverance seemed meagre and remote indeed. Surely nothing in the annals of faith is more sublime than this, that after Judah had been cruelly overrun, with forty-six of her cities in ruins and the dread enemy at the gates, Isaiah should stand forth, calm and unafraid, and declare, against all seeming and all hope, that the unseen Jehovah would defend his city. Jerusalem was one day destined to fall, but not yet; her destruction at that time would have meant the extinction of the religion which found a home within her walls, and that must not be. There, in Zion, was to rise the building whose stones were the faithful (28 : 16) — men like Isaiah and the little band he gathered about him, disciples who, like the master, had a passion for justice and righteousness (28 : 17), and whose eyes had seen the King, in other words, men of faith and character.

Isaiah is thus the prophet of hope as much as of faith. His hope he expressed in his so-called doctrine of the remnant, in the belief that, though not the whole people — that was impossible (22 : 14) — yet a remnant would return to Jehovah; and this hope he incarnated in the son whom he named Shear-jashub [1] (7 : 3). He looked forward to the day when, by a stern judgment, the wicked

[1] This means "a remnant will return."

city would be purged of her dross and become indeed "the City of *righteousness*, the *faithful* Town" (1:25 f.). Righteousness and faith, just and noble civic life and quiet confidence in the unseen God, — it was to create these things among men that Isaiah devoted his long and splendid ministry. Others had insisted on righteousness, but more than any other is he the prophet of faith; and his message is summed up in these three immortal words:

"If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (7:9).

"He that believeth shall not give way" [1] (28:16).

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (30:15).

V. Isaiah as a Writer

The regal soul of Isaiah is reflected in the majesty of his style. He is a rare master in the art of noble speech: always incisive, never diffuse; clear, clean-cut, full-toned, yet governed everywhere by a fine restraint. His superb imagination is evidenced alike in simple figures, such as the comparison of Jehovah to the lion that faces the shepherds, defiant and unafraid (31:4), and in longer and more sustained passages, such as his description of the day of Jehovah, or of the terrible Assyrian army. An illustration or two will be more effective than a chapter of criticism.

Here, for example, is the day of Jehovah, as it appeared to the prophetic eyes of Isaiah:

For a day of Jehovah is coming
Upon all that is haughty and proud,
Upon all that is lofty and high:
Upon cedars of Lebanon all,
And oaks of Bashan all;
Upon all the great mountains
And all the high hills;

[1] Emended text. RV has *make haste*, SV *be in haste*, Gr. *be ashamed*.

Upon all the proud towers
And all the strong walls
And all gallant ships.
Man's haughtiness shall be brought down,
And man's loftiness shall be laid low,
And in that great day
Shall Jehovah alone be exalted.

Get ye into the caves of the rocks
And the holes of the earth,
From before the dread presence of God,
When he rises up to smite earth with his terror
(2 : 12 ff.).

There are few things in literature to surpass in vividness and simple vigor Isaiah's description of the Assyrian army :

See! hastily, swiftly they come,
None weary, none stumbling among them.
The band of their loins never loosed,
The thong of their shoes never torn.
Their arrows are sharpened,
Their bows are all bent.
The hoofs of their horses are counted as flint,
And their wheels as the whirlwind.
Their roar is like that of the lioness,
And like the young lions they roar,
Thundering, seizing the prey,
And bearing it off to a place of security
(5 : 26–29).

VI. Literary Problems of the Book of Isaiah

This is not the place to discuss the literary problems of the book of Isaiah ; but they happen to be of unusual importance in forming a true estimate of what the prophet's message really was, and their nature may be briefly indicated by one or two illustrations.

Take, for example, Chap. 29. The first four verses an-

nounce, in the most unmistakable terms, a terrible siege of Jerusalem, when there will be mourning and lamentation and the city shall be reduced to the most abject humiliation. The fifth verse, however, starts off in a wholly different strain. Here it is announced that *the enemy* shall become like small dust, and like the chaff that passeth away. In vs. 6, Jerusalem is to be "visited of Jehovah" with thunder and earthquake, whirlwind and tempest, and fire. The natural impression made by this verse, if it stood alone, or if it immediately followed vss. 1–4, would be that for Jerusalem the visitation is to be one of terror: Jehovah will come in judgment, and bring the awful powers of nature, as in vss. 1–4 he is to bring the Assyrians, to bear upon the guilty city. But following vs. 5, we must suppose, though this does not seem very natural, that, for Jerusalem, the visitation is a gracious visitation, and the terrors announced are for the enemy. So in vs. 7 the beleaguering foes are to pass like a dream, and in vs. 8 their disappointment is compared to that of a dreamer when he wakes.

Unquestionably the effect of this announcement of the sure and utter destruction of the enemy is to blunt the edge of the terrible prophecy *against* Jerusalem which had just gone before; and it is not only fair but necessary to ask whether the same prophet — especially when that prophet is so consummate an orator as Isaiah — could *at the same time* have delivered two messages, one of which must have gone very far to obliterate from the mind of his audience the terror produced by the other. It is not absolutely inconceivable, especially if the second message were spoken among his intimate disciples, but it does not seem probable.

Or take a similar case in 31 : 4. Isaiah has just been denouncing (vss. 1–3) the Egyptian alliance and declaring that "both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is helped shall fall, and they all shall be consumed together." Then in a simile of splendid power he goes on:

"For thus saith Jehovah unto me, As the lion and the young lion growling over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, will not be dismayed at their voice, nor daunted at the noise of them: so will Jehovah of hosts come down to fight upon Mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof" (vs. 4).

The point is obscured, or rather obliterated, by the translation "*upon* mount Zion" instead of *against* (which is read in the margin).[1] But coming as it does after the threat that "all shall be consumed together," *against* is certainly much more natural and almost certainly correct. In that case, Jehovah is the lion, mighty and unafraid, and *Zion* is his prey. Very different, however, — indeed, quite the reverse, — is the impression made by the following verse (5):

"As birds hovering, so will Jehovah of hosts *protect* Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver it, he will pass over and preserve it."

The transition from the fearless lion to the fluttering birds, though not absolutely indefensible, certainly seems very improbable; and to say nothing of the awkwardness of the sentence in Hebrew, the threat of destruction in vs. 4, which is also supported by the previous context, is simply negated by the promise of preservation in vs. 5. And again we must raise the question: Is it probable that Isaiah or any other speaker would have presented to his audience a message whose component parts were so conflicting as to cancel each other? That were perplexity indeed.

The alternative is to suppose that the original words of Isaiah, which in these passages (as, beyond any question, in 22 : 1–14) were probably words of threat and doom, were supplemented by later writers, who had in view the undoubted historic fact of the preservation of the city, besides other words of Isaiah which had definitely foretold that

[1] The Hebrew preposition can mean either *upon* or *against*.

preservation (cf. 37 : 29; cf. vs. 7). There was all the more likelihood of this, as later ages, which were fond of idealizing Jerusalem, looked forward with imagination and hope to the great day of Jehovah, when the godless nations in vain assault upon the holy city, would be shattered, and the city preserved inviolate. Nothing would be more natural to later scribes, whose ideas of literary property were very different from our own, than to project this thought back upon the prophecies of Isaiah, the more so as it had been encouraged and expressed by other words of his. But in that case it becomes a duty — though frequently a task of great complexity — to disentangle from our present text the original words of Isaiah. It is only then, when the text is stripped of the comments and hopes of later ages, that we can understand the progress of the real message and the changing phases it assumed. Thus, for example, if the argument is correct, Isaiah's message at that moment (in Chaps. 29 and 31) was one of unmitigated doom, and the great prophet strikes a far sterner note than our present text would lead us to suppose.

This is, of course, by no means to say that he was a prophet of doom. We know that he announced the miraculous preservation of the city : we know that he was a prophet of hope, and that he believed that "a remnant would return." But there was also a very stern side to his character and message (cf. 5 : 17 ; 7 : 17 ff. ; 22 : 1-14), which the present text of some passages, whose terror is over through with promise, too easily leads us to forget and ignore; and it is the delicate task of literary criticism to recover so far as it can the prophet's genuine and original words.

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS 1–39

Prophecies concerning Judah and Israel (Chaps. 1–12)

1. Jerusalem : her present sin and punishment : her future redemption and glory (1 : 1–2 : 5).
   (1) The prophet's lament over the unfaithfulness of the people to their God (1 : 1–9).

(2) The futility of a merely ceremonial worship (1 : 10–17).
(3) The great alternatives (1 : 18–20).
(4) Zion's present shame and future glory (1 : 21–28).
(5) The heathen cult and its doom (1 : 29–31).
(6) Jerusalem the centre of blessing to the world (2 : 1–5).

2. Judgment upon the wealth and pride of Judah (2 : 6–4 : 6).
   (1) Jehovah's judgment day (2 : 6–22).
   (2) A reign of anarchy (3 : 1–15).
   (3) The doom of the haughty women (3 : 16–4 : 1).
   (4) Zion's final glory (4 : 2–6).
3. The vineyard with the wild grapes (chap. 5).
   (1) The song of the vineyard (5 : 1–7).
   (2) Woe! (5 : 8–24).
   (3) A foreign army is coming (5 : 25–30).
4. The prophet's call (chap. 6).
5. The crisis of 735 B.C. (7 : 1–9 : 7).
   (1) The prophet's word to the terrified king (7 : 1–9).
   (2) The great refusal and the sign (7 : 10–16).
   (3) Judah will also be ravaged (7 : 17–25).
   (4) The fall of Damascus and Samaria (8 : 1–4).
   (5) The invasion of Judah (8 : 5–8).
   (6) The futility of opposition to Judah (8 : 9 f).
   (7) None is to be feared but Jehovah (8 : 11–15).
   (8) Isaiah's patient hope (8 : 16–18).
   (9) The awful plight of unbelieving Judah (8 : 19–22).
   (10) The great deliverance and the glorious king (9 : 1–7).
6. The doom of Israel (9 : 8–10 : 4).
7. The doom of the Assyrian (10 : 5–34).
   (1) The two plans — Assyria's and Jehovah's (10 : 5–15).
   (2) The fate of Assyria and Judah (10 : 16–23).
   (3) The consolation of Zion : Assyria will assuredly fall (10 : 24–34
8. The bliss of Israel in the latter days (chaps. 11 and 12).
   (1) The Messianic king and kingdom (11 : 1–9).
   (2) The triumphal return (11 : 10–16).
   (3) The song of thanksgiving (chap. 12).

PROPHECIES CONCERNING FOREIGN NATIONS (Chaps 13–23)

1. Prophecy concerning Babylon (13 : 1–14 : 23).
   (1) The doom of Babylon (chap. 13).
   (2) Song of triumph over the fall of Babylon's king (14 : 1–23).
2. Jehovah's invincible world plan (14 : 24–27).
3. Warning to Philistia (14 : 28–32).
4. Lament over Moab (chaps. 15 and 16).
5. Prophecy concerning Damascus and northern Israel (17 : 1–11).
   (1) The destruction of Damascus (17 : 1–3).
   (2) The doom of Israel (17 : 4–11).
6. The speedy doom of the Assyrians (17 : 12–18 : 7).
   (1) Their sudden destruction (17 : 12–14).
   (2) Isaiah's answer to the Ethiopian ambassadors (chap. 18).
7. The destiny of Egypt (chap. 19).
   (1) The disasters of Egypt (19 : 1–15).
   (2) The conversion of Egypt (19 : 16–25).

8. Warning against the folly of an alliance with Egypt (chap. 20).
9. The Fall of Babylon (chap. 21).
   (1) Its consequences for Judah (21 : 1–10).
   (2) Its consequences for the trading tribes of the desert (21 : 11–17).
10. Judah's unpardonable sin (22 : 1–14).
11. Personal threats and promises (22 : 15–25).
   (1) The doom of Shebna (22 : 15–18).
   (2) The exaltation of Eliakim (22 : 19–23).
   (3) The downfall of Eliakim's family (22 : 24 f).
12. The fate of Phœnicia (chap. 23).
   (1) The elegy (23 : 1–14).
   (2) The revival of Tyre (23 : 15–18).

THE GREAT WORLD JUDGMENT (Chaps. 24–27)

1. The judgment : the rebels punished (chap. 24).
2. Song of thanksgiving over the destruction of some proud city (25 : 1–5).
3. The banquet of the nations on Mount Zion (25 : 6–8).
4. Song over the anticipated destruction of Moab (25 : 9–12).
5. Song of gratitude and hope (26 : 1–19).
   (1) Jerusalem secure : the proud city destroyed (26 : 1–6).
   (2) It is well with the righteous, ill with the wicked (26 : 7–10).
   (3) The utter destruction of the enemy (26 : 11–14).
   (4) A yet more glorious day (26 : 15–19).
6. Israel's security in the great world judgment (26 : 20–27 : 1).
7. Song of the vineyard (27 : 2–6).
8. Jehovah's mercy to Israel (27 : 7–11).
9. Gathered home (27 : 12 f).

WARNINGS AND PROMISES TO JERUSALEM (Chaps. 28–33)

1. Woe to Samaria (28 : 1–6).
2. The scoffers of Jerusalem threatened (28 : 7–22).
   (1) Isaiah's solemn warning to the drunken priests and prophets (28 : 7–13).
   (2) The folly of the Egyptian alliance (28 : 14–22).
3. The patience and consideratenes of the divine purpose (28 : 23–29).
4. The character and fate of Jerusalem (29 : 1–15).
   (1) The fate of Jerusalem (29 : 1–8).
   (2) The spiritual torpor and religious formality of the people (29 : 9–15).
5. Doubters rebuked by a vision of Israel's welfare in the latter days (29 : 16–24).
6. The Egyptian alliance a ruinous policy (30 : 1–17).
   (1) The embassy to Egypt (30 : 1–7).
   (2) Judah's rebellion and ruin (30 : 8–17).
7. The final triumph and prosperity of Jerusalem (30 : 18–33).
   (1) Forgiveness and prosperity (30 : 18–26).
   (2) The glorious triumph (30 : 27–33).
8. The folly of the Egyptian alliance (31 : 1–4).
9. The enemy's downfall (31 : 5–9).
10. Rulers and people in the coming days (32 : 1–8).
11. Warning to the women (32 : 9–14).

12. The security and prosperity of the coming days (32 : 15–20).
13. The present distress and future glory of Jerusalem (chap. 33).
    (1) The distress (33 : 1–9).
    (2) The deliverance (33 : 10–24).

THE GOLDEN AGE (Chaps. 34 and 35)

1. The day of vengeance (chap. 34).
    (1) The destruction of the nations (34 : 1–4).
    (2) The destruction of Edom (34 : 5–17).
2. The joy of the redeemed (chap. 35).

HISTORICAL APPENDIX (Chaps. 36–39)

1. Isaiah encourages Hezekiah to resist Sennacherib's summons to surrender Jerusalem (chaps. 36 and 37).
    (1) First narrative (36 : 1–37 : 9 a, 37 f).
    (2) Second narrative (36 : 9–36).
2. Hezekiah's sickness, recovery, and song of thanksgiving (chap. 38).
    (1) Hezekiah's sickness (38 : 1–8).
    (2) His song of thanksgiving (38 : 9–20).
    (3) His recovery (38 : 21 f).
3. Hezekiah's vanity and Isaiah's rebuke (chap. 39).

VIII. CHRONOLOGY

B.C.

740. Death of Uzziah, king of Judah. Call of Isaiah.
735. Invasion of Judah by Aram (Syria) and Israel.
734. Northern Israel ravaged
732. Capture of Damascus (chief city of Aram)
721. Capture of Samaria (chief city of Israel) } by the Assyrians.
711. Capture of Ashdod (one of the chief cities of the Philistines)
701. Invasion of Judah by the Assyrians under Sennacherib.
681. Assassination of Sennacherib.
607. Fall of Nineveh.
    End of the Assyrian and establishment of the Babylonian empire.
604–561. Reign of Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon.
586. Fall of Jerusalem.
586–538. Babylonian exile.

549–546. Conquest of Media and Lydia by Cyrus.
540 (about). Deutero-Isaiah (Chaps. 40–55).
538. Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus.
End of the Babylonian and establishment of the Persian empire.
537. Jewish exiles return to Palestine.
520–516. Building of the second temple.
460 (about). Trito-Isaiah (Chaps. 56–66). Malachi.
445. Nehemiah arrives at Jerusalem, rebuilds the walls, and reorganizes the community.

Bibliography

The literature on Isaiah is very extensive. Especially numerous are German monographs dealing with particular critical or historical problems. The following brief list, having in view the needs of the average English or American reader unacquainted with Hebrew and not deeply interested in critical problems, is deliberately confined to English books of a scholarly but untechnical nature.

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Chapters 40–66

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THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET ISAIAH

PROPHECIES CONCERNING JUDAH AND ISRAEL (Chaps. 1–12)

JERUSALEM: HER PRESENT SIN AND PUNISHMENT: HER FUTURE REDEMPTION AND GLORY (1 : 1–2 : 5) 1 : 1

The Superscription (1 : 1)

1. The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The interest of the opening section of the book of Isaiah (1 : 1–2 : 5) gathers round the fortunes of Jerusalem. The tone is on the whole sorrowful and severe; but the pervading gloom gives place in occasional verses, and especially towards the end (2 : 2–4), to brilliant visions of the ultimate redemption and glory of the now sinful city. Thus, whether its several paragraphs all come from the hand of Isaiah or not, the section, as we now have it, constitutes an artistic and impressive unity.

1 : 1. A prophet is a seer, a man of **vision**; and what he declares is what **he saw**. The title in vs. 1, which confines the prophecies to Judah and Jerusalem, clearly cannot apply to the whole book. Chap. 13, for example, deals with Babylon; probably it applies only to Chaps. 1–12. Isaiah received his prophetic call in the year that King **Uzziah** died (cf. 6 : 1), *i.e.* 740 B.C., and his career extended at any rate through forty years — to 701 B.C., the year of Sennacherib's famous campaign against **Jerusalem**, in the reign of **Hezekiah**.

1 : 2–9. The forlorn condition of Jerusalem (vs. 8), the havoc wrought in Judah (vs. 7), and the fact that this havoc is wrought

The Prophet's Indignant Lament over the Unfaithfulness of the People to their God (1 : 2–9)

2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,
For the LORD hath spoken;
I have nourished and brought up children,
And they have rebelled against me.
3. The ox knoweth his owner,
And the ass his master's crib;
But Israel doth not know,

by strangers (vs. 7), seem to point to the invasion of the country by Sennacherib and the Assyrians in 701 B.C. In that case, this would be one of the very latest of Isaiah's prophecies, and the chapter would serve, as it were, the purpose of a frontispiece to the book.

2. The book grandly opens with a few brief, sad words of Jehovah himself, in which he laments his people's ignorance, ingratitude, and infidelity — words of such high and serious import that the prophet calls upon the **heavens** to **hear**, and the **earth** to **hearken**: for heaven and earth are silent witnesses of the great human drama, and are here poetically conceived as capable of being moved by the sight and the story of Israel's guilt — awful witnesses of an awful crime.

Jehovah hath spoken: and the quickened conscience of the prophet, as he watched and pondered the conduct of his sinful people, heard the words plainly enough.

Sons have I reared, and lifted to honor;
But as for them, they are rebels against me.

The love of Jehovah for his children had been signally manifested in the exodus (cf. Hos. 11 : 1; 9 : 10), but that love had followed them into Canaan, and had there *exalted* them by giving them victory in war, a high place among the nations, healthful institutions, — in particular, the institutions of religion (cf. Deut. 4 : 6). But *they* (emphatic in the Hebrew) — those very children whom he had thus reared and honored — have played the rebel, in ways which are illustrated but too vividly by the subsequent verses of the chapter (cf. vss. 15–23): chiefly by violation of the spirit of justice and mercy which are the essence of true religion (cf. Mic. 6 : 8).

3. In a household, the domestic animals know their master;

My people doth not consider.
4. Ah sinful nation,
A people laden with iniquity,
A seed of evil-doers,
Children that deal corruptly:
They have forsaken the LORD,
They have despised the Holy One of Israel,
They are estranged *and gone* backward.
5. Why will ye be still stricken,
That ye revolt more and more?
The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faint.
6. From the sole of the foot even unto the head
There is no soundness in it;
But wounds, and bruises,
And [1] festering sores:

[1] AV *putrifying sores.* m. SV *fresh stripes.*

how much more the children their father! But Israel, though **my people**, a family of sons for whom Jehovah had done so much (vs. 2), does not know; they are more stupid than the ox or ass. *Ignorance* of God and of the true nature of his demands as moral and not ceremonial (cf. vss. 11–17) was responsible for the deplorable condition of Israel (cf. Hos. 4 : 1).

4. The calm speech of Jehovah is followed by the more passionate utterance of his prophet (vss. 4–9), who now addresses the people directly (the Greek version reads, "*ye* have forsaken the Lord and provoked the Holy One of Israel") in the language of indignant reproach, as a *brood of malefactors*, who despise "the *Holy* One of Israel," Isaiah's favorite epithet for Jehovah. Something of what this holiness meant may be gathered from Isaiah's inaugural vision (6 : 3).

5a. The precise meaning of the first clause is not absolutely certain. It is either a half-pathetic, half-indignant reproach of their folly for their persistent depravity, "**Why will ye still be smitten?**" or the words may mean that the body has already been so thoroughly battered and bruised that there is no place left for a further blow: "*On what spot can ye still be smitten?*"

5b, 6. Here, as frequently in the Old Testament (cf. Ezek. 16),

They have not been closed, neither bound up,
Neither mollified with [1] oil.
7. Your country is desolate;
Your cities are burned with fire;
Your land, strangers devour it in your presence,
And it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers.
8. And the daughter of Zion is left

[1] AV *ointment.*

the nation is regarded as a person. It is bruised and wounded, sick, and faint; the *head* and *heart* are specially mentioned as the most vital members. **They have not been closed**: the meaning is probably that the matter has not been *pressed* out of the wounds. Jehovah is the great physician who alone can heal them. But they have rebelled (vs. 2), and revolted (vs. 5), so they remain unhealed. These verses might be a description of the corrupt state of the body politic; but after the reference to the further strokes in prospect (at the beginning of vs. 5), they are more naturally explained, in accordance with vs. 7, as a description of the effect of the Assyrian invasion of Judah. It was this that had bruised and wounded the country, and left it in a state of unhealed misery.

7. A graphic description, apparently, of the desolation wrought in Judah by Sennacherib and the Assyrians in 701 B.C. In his inscription, Sennacherib claims to have taken forty-six of the cities of Judah. The **strangers** who destroy the land, *i.e.* the *cultivated* land, are the Assyrians; and the desolation they have wrought in Judah is comparable only to "the overthrow of *Sodom*," as we should probably read (rather than **strangers**) at the end of the verse. The story of the fate of Sodom (Gen. 19) left an indelible impression upon the Hebrew mind, and was often used by the prophets to heighten the terror of a threat or a description. (Cf. Amos 4 : 11.) The last sentence is regarded by some recent scholars as a gloss.

8. In the invasion of 701 B.C. Jerusalem was, in the most wonderful way and against all probability, preserved, as Isaiah had foretold (cf. 37 : 29). But Sennacherib claims, in his inscription, to have shut up Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage," and the position of Jerusalem must have been desperate enough. Through the imagery of this verse we get a glimpse of her forlorn and helpless case. **The daughter of Zion**, *i.e.* Zion or Jerusalem herself,

As a booth in a vineyard,
As a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,
As a besieged city.

9. Except the LORD of hosts Rom. 9:29
Had left unto us a very small remnant,
We should have been as Sodom,
We should have been like unto Gomorrah.

personified as a woman, is left like a **booth** in a vineyard, like a **lodge** in a field of cucumbers. The booth or lodge was a simple and rather flimsy structure, which served as a temporary shelter for the men who watched and guarded the fields; it well suggests the loneliness and defencelessness of Jerusalem at a time when city after city of Judah was falling before the Assyrians. As Jerusalem actually *was* at this time **a besieged city** and not merely *like* one, the last comparison should perhaps be translated, *like a watch-tower*, a figure which would practically repeat and clinch the other two.

9. In the havoc wrought upon Judah, Jerusalem is providentially left as a **remnant**. The idea of the remnant (though the word here used is not Isaiah's habitual word) plays an important part in the thought and teaching of the prophet. Jerusalem was spared, according to Isaiah, not by accident, but by *Providence;* it was the work of **Jehovah of hosts** — a phrase which, originally used perhaps to designate Jehovah as the lord and leader of the hosts of heaven (*i.e.* the stars conceived as human beings) and subsequently of the hosts or armies of Israel, comes, in the prophets, to have a more comprehensive sweep, and marks him out as lord of the universe. We should perhaps transfer the word rendered *very small* to the next sentence, and read:

Had Jehovah of hosts not left us a remnant,
Almost had we been as Sodom and like to Gomorrah.

The sin of Judah and the devastation which was sent by way of penalty have been vividly set forth. The people may have resented the prophet's interpretation of their calamities, and pointed to the splendor and assiduity of their worship. To their protest he replies in the next paragraph.

1:10–17. The prophet's message of doom sounded in the ears of the people as a heresy. Was not their worship of the most earnest and sumptuous sort? Surely Jehovah could never destroy the people who served him so scrupulously. But to Isaiah and the people the service of Jehovah meant two very different things:

The Futility of a merely Ceremonial Worship (1 : 10–17)

10. Hear the word of the LORD,
Ye rulers of Sodom;
Give ear unto the law of our God
Ye people of Gomorrah.

11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?
Saith the LORD.
I am full of the burnt offerings of rams,
And the fat of fed beasts;
And I delight not in the blood of bullocks,
Or of lambs, or of he-goats.

---

to them it was a ritual thing, to him a moral. This great section shows how completely the prophets despised a religion which was exhausted in ritual, and how earnestly they championed morality as the supreme expression of religion.

10. Through the imperative **hear** we get a glimpse of a great and eager crowd of worshippers gathered in the temple courts. The prophet addresses the worshippers — leaders and people alike — as citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. The idea is not so much that the fate of Jerusalem will be like theirs, as that her guilt is like theirs, as though the two really go together — like in guilt, and like in destiny. This is, of course, the language of prophetic hyperbole; in point of fact, the sins of which Jerusalem was guilty, as enumerated, *e.g.*, in vs. 17, were not so terrible as the sins of Sodom (cf. Gen. 13 : 13; 19 : 5 ff.). But the strong language shows how utterly abominable to the soul of a prophet is a religion which cares everything for ritual, and nothing for morals. **The law of our God** has here nothing to do with any written law, such as we find in the Pentateuch. Law is *instruction*, and is here, as the parallelism shows, identical with **the word of Jehovah**, that is, the word which he speaks through his prophet Isaiah — practically it is the challenge which follows in vss. 11–17.

11. The people addressed by Isaiah are a zealous people, who offer a **multitude** of sacrifices: probably their zeal was at this period heightened by the fear of Assyria. The **sacrifice** is here a general word for the offering of a slain animal; it might be offered to the deity in whole, as a **burnt offering** entirely consumed upon the altar, or in part, as the *fat* and the *blood*. Beasts of several kinds were offered, Jehovah is *sated with them;* but what is it all

12. When ye come to appear before me,
Who hath required this at your hand,

to him? That is not what he desires or *delights in*. In their conception of religion, the great prophets appear to have given practically no place whatever to animal sacrifice, which bulked so largely in the popular conception; to them the sacrifice of the will was paramount (Ps. 40 : 6–8). Amos (5 : 25) and Jeremiah (7 : 22) maintain that animal sacrifice had formed no part of the divine demand in the days of the Exodus — then and now and ever, what God requires of man is a moral service (Micah 6 : 6–8), mercy, and not sacrifice (Hos. 6 : 6). It is not surprising that this word of Hosea's, which so aptly crystallizes the prophetic conception of religion, was specially dear to our Lord (Mat. 9 : 13; 12 : 7).

12, 13a. Metrical and other considerations seem to suggest that the last clause of vs. 12 should be taken with vs. 13. The treading of the courts could not in any case be required of the *hands*. We should probably therefore translate:

When ye come to behold my face,
Who hath required this at your hands?
Trample my courts no more,
Bring offerings (no more).
Vain is the smoke of sacrifice,
It is an abomination to me.

The present Hebrew text is pointed, against the grammar, to mean: " when ye come to *appear*, or *show yourselves*, before me." There can be no doubt, however, that the Hebrew words originally meant and were intended to mean: " when ye come *to see my face* " — a phrase which carries one back to a time when God was conceived as a man, and mortals were supposed to speak to him, and see him face to face, though in Isaiah's time the phrase can have meant little more than turning the face in the direction of the inner shrine of the sanctuary, where the presence of Jehovah was supposed uniquely to be. Even so, however, the anthropomorphic flavor of the phrase was objectionable to the austere theologians of a later date, and the word was pointed as a passive, or rather middle, not active, so as to suggest that *the people* appeared or showed themselves, and thus to eliminate the idea of beholding the divine face. Similar liberties are not infrequently taken with the original text, sometimes by the later Jews who pointed the consonantal text, sometimes much earlier still by the Greek-speaking translators, who, for example, in Exod. 24 : 10, transform " they saw the God of Israel " into " they saw *the place where the God of Israel stood*."

Who hath required this — that is, such sacrifices as are men-

To trample my courts?
13. Bring no more vain oblations.
Incense is an abomination unto me;
New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies, —
I cannot away with
[1] Iniquity and the solemn meeting.
14. Your new moons and your appointed feasts

[1] Gr. *fasting*.

tioned in the preceding verse — **at your hand?** As a matter of fact, there was an ancient law which did require that no worshipper should appear empty-handed (Exod. 23 : 15; 34 : 20). The prophetic conception of religion, however, as we have seen, was different.

It is difficult to decide between *Bring no more a vain offering: the smoke of sacrifice is an abomination to me*, and *Bring no more offerings: vain is the smoke of sacrifice, it is an abomination to me.* The latter is more drastic and is probably to be preferred. **Offering** here is a general word covering animal sacrifice, though in the later law the term was confined to the bloodless sacrifice.

13b, 14. Not only are the sacrifices detestable, but the very holy days themselves, of which the *new moon* and the *sabbath* (frequently mentioned together, cf. Amos 8 : 5, Hos. 2 : 11) are specially singled out. The **new moon** must have been a very ancient festival, and goes back to Israel's nomadic days: the **sabbath**, apparently of Babylonian origin, was probably first domesticated among the Hebrews — and, in the process, transformed — in the agricultural period that followed their entrance into Canaan. We can hardly suppose that the holy days are objectionable in themselves, but simply as affording opportunity for the **convocation** of the immoral worshippers. After **I cannot** perhaps the word **bear** should be supplied (there is no equivalent for **away with** in the Hebrew): *New moon and sabbath, solemn convocation, I cannot bear.* The last two Hebrew words of vs. 13 might be translated *wickedness and worship* (lit. *iniquity and sacred assembly*), and would give a fine epigrammatic point to the verse. For "iniquity," however, the Greek version reads *fasting*, and this is possibly correct. Participation in the act of worship or communion with the deity was often preceded by preparatory fasting, so that the two words together might indicate a certain scrupulous piety. This kind of piety, however, offered by wor-

My soul hateth:
They are a trouble unto me;
I am weary to bear them.
15. And when ye spread forth your hands,
I will hide mine eyes from you:
Yea, when ye make many prayers,
I will not hear:
Your hands are full of blood.
16. Wash you, make you clean;
Put away the evil of your doings
From before mine eyes;
Cease to do evil:
17. Learn to do well
Seek judgement,

---

shippers with hands full of blood (vs. 15), *my soul hateth.* The **appointed feasts** are the festivals determined by the season of the year (Gen. 1 : 14). The sacred seasons and sacrifices lie upon Jehovah like a *burden* which wearies him; his patience is exhausted and he will bear it no more.

15. Prayer is a higher expression of religion than animal sacrifice; but their prayers, passionately offered with *outstretched hands*, are as detestable as their sacrifices, because in their social relations they show neither mercy nor justice (vss. 16, 17). Jehovah will not hear the prayers of such men, however *many* or passionate they be: he will hide his eyes as a man does, who refuses to grant a request (Prov. 28 : 27).

16. The last clause of vs. 15 should go with vs. 16:

Your hands are full of blood,
Wash, cleanse yourselves.

The *blood* which stained their hands vividly suggests the violence which those unscrupulous hypocrites did not hesitate to use, in order to compass their nefarious ends. The hands outstretched in prayer are red. Hands and hearts sorely need to be cleansed. The God whom they worshipped was not blind to the immorality of their social life: "put away the evil of your doings *from before mine eyes.*"

17. The vague phrases, **cease to do evil, learn to do well** — whether part of the original text or not — receive at any rate much more concrete and definite expression in the four following

Relieve the oppressed,
Judge the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.

The Great Alternatives (1 : 18–20)

18. Come now, and let us reason together,
Saith the LORD;
Though your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;

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phrases, which show that what Isaiah means by *good* is justice and mercy as applied to social relations, "seek *justice*." Probably instead of **relieve the oppressed**, we should translate *restrain* (or, by the change of a letter, *chastise*) *the man of violence*. The **fatherless** and the **widow**, having no natural defenders, would fall an easy prey to the unscrupulous; but Israel's God is on the side of the weak, and those who worship him truly are like him in their regard for the defenceless. True religion, according to Isaiah, consists not in offering animal sacrifice, but in defending the rights of the weak, especially when they were assailed by avarice and imperilled by unjust legal processes. The truest expression of religion is justice and pity in our relations with our fellow-men (cf. Js. 1 : 27).

1 : 18–20. An invitation is given by Jehovah to the people to **come** — before a court, as it were, in which each party may *argue* his case. In point of fact, it is only Jehovah who speaks; he lays down the terms of acceptance and rejection — terms which the conscience of the people must admit to be reasonable.

18. **Though your sins** (such as are described or implied in vss. 15–17, 21, etc.) **be as scarlet**, etc. This looks like a promise of forgiveness — the *red* sin (cf. vs. 15) will be washed white (though, in vs. 16, the washing was to be done by themselves). It must be admitted, however, that, considering the dreadful state of Jerusalem as disclosed alike by the preceding and the following verses (21 ff.), so emphatic an assurance of forgiveness, especially at the very beginning of Jehovah's *argument*, comes as an abrupt surprise — softened indeed, somewhat, by reading back into vs. 18 the conditions laid down in vss. 19 and 20. This difficulty has led some scholars to take the second clauses as stinging and indignant questions: "though your sins be as scarlet, *shall they be white as snow? . . . shall they be as wool?*" with the implied answer, "Nay, verily." Red sins cannot be so easily washed out as a frivolous

Though they be red like crimson
They shall be as wool.

19. If ye be willing and obedient,
Ye shall eat the good of the land:

20. But if ye refuse and rebel,
Ye shall be devoured with the sword.
For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Zion's Present Shame and Future Glory (1 : 21–28)

21. How is the faithful city
Become an harlot!
She that was full of judgement!

people may imagine (cf. Hos. 6 : 1–4). The common interpretation of the verse may, however, perhaps be retained, for the next two verses make it very plain that the forgiveness is not unconditionally offered. **Crimson**, the Hebrew word denotes primarily the insect from which the color was obtained.

19 f. Note how, as so often in the Old Testament, penitence and obedience are represented as being rewarded by material prosperity — **the good of the land** — and disobedience by disaster, here the disaster of war: "ye shall be made to taste the sword," meaning "the sword shall devour you." Apparently, when these verses were spoken, an invasion was impending and the prophet seizes the opportunity to lead the people to repentance.

1 : 21–28. This little poem in Hebrew elegiac metre (generally with three accents in the first line and two in the second, thus:

Hów is the faíthful city
Becóme a hárlot!)

repeats in more pathetic words the charges already made against Jerusalem, and contrasts her present shame with the glory that will be hers when she is redeemed from her sin.

21. The prophet looks wistfully back to the early days of Jerusalem's history, the times of David and Solomon, when she was a faithful city, faithful to the principles of *right* and *justice*, with which Jehovah is peculiarly identified (vss. 16, 17); now she is a **harlot**, that is, unfaithful to those principles. She may be faithful enough in offering her animal sacrifices (vss. 11 ff.); but it is her attitude to what is socially just and right that is the real test of her fidelity to her God.

Righteousness lodged in her,
But now murderers.
22. Thy silver is become dross,
Thy wine mixed with water.
23. Thy princes are rebellious,
And companions of thieves:
Every one loveth gifts,
And followeth after rewards:
They judge not the fatherless,
Neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.
24. Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
The Mighty One of Israel,
Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries,
And avenge me of mine enemies:
25. And I will turn my hand upon thee,
And thoroughly purge away thy dross,
And will take away all thy tin:

22. The contrast between *then* and *now* is pitiful. Then it was silver, now it is dross; then pure wine, now adulterated. The **silver** and the **wine** probably refer to the "justice and right" of vs. 21 — corrupted now by the venal practices of the judges.

23. This verse gives a concrete picture of the deterioration, which consists, as in vs. 17, in the unblushing disregard of justice and mercy. The **princes** represent officialdom: in the Hebrew sentence, there is, as often (cf. Hos. 9 : 15), a play upon words — "thy rulers are unruly" (Cheyne), thy rulers are rebels. They were responsible, in part, for the administration of justice, but instead of suppressing crime they actually abetted it by accepting *bribes*, and so made themselves the *confederates* of contemptible *thieves*. Worst of all, they ignore the rights of the defenceless orphan and widow (vs. 17).

24. There can be no hope for a city with officials like these; enemies of right, they are enemies of God, and he must get rid of them. He is Israel's *strong one*, who will use his strength to take *vengeance* upon them.

25. The process by which the city is to be purified is compared to the smelting of impure ore. Jehovah *turns his* mighty *hand* in judgment against the city. **I will purge thy dross as with lye** — a vegetable alkali, which was used to help the process of smelting

26. And I will restore thy judges as at the first,
And thy counsellors as at the beginning :
Afterward thou shalt be called The City of Righteousness,
The Faithful City.
27. Zion shall be redeemed with judgement,
And her converts with righteousness.
28. But the destruction of the transgressors and the sinners shall be together,
And they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

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and separation — **and all thine alloy I will remove**, that Jerusalem might again become the pure silver which she had been at the first (vs. 22). Instead of *as with lye*, we may read, by a very simple change, " I will purge away thy dross *in the furnace*."

26. The result of this smelting process, with its consequent removal of the dross, would be the restoration of Jerusalem to its pristine purity. And as the rulers, and in particular the administrators of justice, were largely responsible for her decadence (vs. 23), so, in the restoration, their places would be taken by men worthy of the ancient régime; and then Jerusalem, once more the home of right and justice (vs. 21), would again deserve the name Faithful City — the name with which the elegy began (vs. 21).

27 f. With vs. 26, which is an echo of vs. 21, the poem is admirably rounded off. Vss. 27, 28, the terms of which are more general and less concrete, may have been added at a later date; but they are thoroughly appropriate to the spirit of the preceding poem, contemplating as they do the salvation of Zion and the destruction of the rebels. Here it is apparently not to her own (cf. vs. 21), but to the divine justice and righteousness that Zion and her converts owe their redemption.

1 : 29–31. This section gives us a glimpse into the old heathen worship of trees and springs, which persisted among the people despite all prophetic preaching and which even yet is not dead. In 65 : 3; 66 : 17, passages which are almost certainly post-exilic, there is a similar reference to *gardens* as the seats of idolatrous worship; but, considering the reverence with which " sacred " trees were always regarded, this practice may well have been common in Isaiah's time, and this scathing condemnation may have come from the prophet himself.

The Heathen Cult and Its Doom (1 : 29–31)

29. For[1] they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired,
And ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.
30. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth,
And as a garden that hath no water.
31. And the strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark;
And they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

Jerusalem, the Centre of Blessing to the World (2 : 1–5)

2. The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

[1] Some Hebrew MSS. read *ye*. Gr. reads *they* throughout in vss. 29–31.

29. The change in vs. 29 from the third person to the second is strange and difficult to explain naturally: apparently we must read throughout the section either the third person or the second, "Ye shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded," etc. Their heathenish worship would lead to nothing but disappointment.

30. The withered leaves of the tree and the vanished waters of the spring were proofs of the impotence of the deities who were supposed to haunt them, and symbols of the fate of those who worshipped there. "In Palestine, for the most part, the presence of a spring, or a capacious cistern, was essential to the existence of a garden" (Hastings, *Dict. of the Bible*, ii, 109); hence the pathos of the garden that hath no water.

31. These idolaters, *strong* in their own eyes as the oaks (cf. Amos 2 : 9) which they worship, are doomed, with all their works and devices, to irrevocable destruction — pictured here as a judgment of fire.

2 : 1–5. This beautiful picture of Jerusalem in "the issue of the days," when the whole world would recognize her unique religious supremacy, and flock to her to have difficult cases settled by the

2. And it shall come to pass in the latter days,
That the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established
[1] In the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;

[1] Gr. adds *and the house of God.*

arbitration of her God and his laws, forms a very effective contrast to the picture of the sinful city with which Chap. 1 opened, and of the description of the idolatries with which it closed. In spite of the new superscription (vs. 1; cf. 1:1) which shows that the chapters introduced by it (probably Chaps. 2–4) once formed an independent group and circulated separately, the present setting of the passage strongly suggests that it was originally intended as a foil to the descriptions of the real Jerusalem in Chap. 1, like the corresponding passage in Micah 4:1–4; it would certainly form a happy conclusion to the first group of prophecies (1:1–2:5).

It is difficult to say what the connection is between this passage and the similar passage in Micah 4:1–4. Either Isaiah borrowed from Micah, or Micah from Isaiah, or both from an older prophecy, or in both cases the passage is a later insertion. For several reasons the last supposition seems, on the whole, the most probable.

1. Cf. 1:1.

2. **In the latter days.** The true prophet looks frankly at the present (cf. Chap. 1), but his eyes are no less fixed upon the future. Beyond *these* days, he sees the days that come *after;* and the phrase "the after-days," the sequel or "issue of the days," naturally came to acquire an almost technical meaning, and was used to indicate what we commonly speak of as the Messianic age, the happy, righteous era which would succeed the wretched and sinful age that now is. In this striking passage, it is regarded as an age in which war shall be no more (cf. 9:5) and the disputes of the nations will be settled by arbitration.

The Greek version and the parallelism in vs. 3 suggest that the original text ran thus:

The mount of Jehovah shall be firmly established,
And the house of our God on the chief of the mountains.

The reference is to the temple and the temple hill. Jerusalem is the religious capital of the world, the temple the most sacred thing in Jerusalem, *the house of our God*, and the temple hill the chief mountain in the world, *the head of the mountains*. This is

And all nations shall flow unto it,

3. And many peoples shall go and say,

"Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
And he will teach us of his ways,
And we will walk in his paths:
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."

4. And he shall judge between the nations,
And shall reprove many peoples,
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,

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the vision of a patriot. The translation in the text of SV, "*on* the top of the mountains," is too grotesque to be probable; "*at* the top or head" (SVm) is more likely, especially as later writers do actually appear to have anticipated a physical elevation of Zion, which, according to Ezek. 40 : 2, for example, is a very high mountain — it is to tower above the other hills. In any case, however, the real greatness of Zion in this passage is her spiritual elevation; in knowledge of the right, in appreciation of the divine will, she towers above all other nations of the world, who have to come (to *stream*) to her for instruction.

3. The nations are represented as recognizing the religious supremacy of Jerusalem: she has what they have not — a divine **word**, a **law**, that is, instruction (cf. 1 : 10) in the **way** in which he would have them **walk**. Therefore to Jerusalem they go "*that* he may teach" them through the medium of priest or prophet.

4. This verse explains the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. They go for the arbitration of difficult cases, which they would otherwise have settled by war. The pilgrims are men familiar with the use of **sword** and **spear**; but the decision which they receive in Zion is so just and satisfactory that they destroy their weapons, for which they have now no more use. Or rather they do not destroy them, they transform them into useful implements of agriculture. Here we get a glimpse of Israel's love for the country life; in the golden age, ploughshares and pruning-hooks will have a conspicuous place. Again we see the prophet's horror of war — in the better world to be, the nations *shall learn war no more* (cf. 9 : 5).

And their spears into pruning-hooks:
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more.

5. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

JUDGMENT UPON THE WEALTH AND PRIDE OF JUDAH (2:6–4:6)

Jehovah's Judgment Day (2:6–22)

6. For [1] thou hast forsaken thy people
The house of Jacob,

[1] Gr. *he has forsaken his people.*

5. A tender appeal to Israel herself to walk in the light of the revelation with which she has been so conspicuously blessed.

This remarkable passage (vss. 2–5) shows how practical, as well as idealistic, were the thinkers of Israel. It contains in germ the solution of the peace problem. War will be no more when the nations, now armed to the teeth, are willing to submit their disputes to the arbitration of Zion; in other words, when they are willing to have them decided by those principles of justice which were never more earnestly or eloquently proclaimed than by the Hebrew prophets, and which are identified with Jerusalem as with no other city in the world. The passage presupposes nations which will be reasonable enough to seek for arbitration from a court which they can trust, and content to abide by the decision when it is pronounced.

2:6–4:6. This group must be among the very earliest of all Isaiah's prophecies. Part of it falls in the brief reign of Jotham (740–736 B.C.) soon after Uzziah's death (cf. 6:1); the brilliance, energy, and enterprise of Uzziah's highly prosperous reign are felt through the prophet's solemn warnings of doom. Part of the prophecy may come, however, from the beginning of the reign of Ahaz; 3:12, for example, seems to be an unmistakable allusion to that irresolute king. We cannot go far wrong in assigning at least Chaps. 2 and 3 to the years 740–736 or 735 B.C.

2:6–22. The prosperous enterprise of the reign of Uzziah has brought to Judah the luxury and the superstition of the East, and engendered in her a temper of worldliness and pride. For all

Because they be filled *with customs* from the east,
And *are* soothsayers like the Philistines,
And they strike hands with the children of strangers.
7. Their land also is full of silver and gold,
Neither is there any end of their treasures;

these things a day of judgment is coming; and the judgment, which is described in a poem of splendid power, is colored by Isaiah's experience of the terrible earthquake which occurred in the reign of Uzziah (cf. Amos 1:1), and which remained a national memory for centuries (Zech. 14:5).

6. The poem can hardly have begun with **for**. It has been aptly conjectured that this verse may originally have been preceded by the refrain which now appears in different forms, in vss. 10, 19, 21. "Enter the rocky caverns and hide thee in the dust, etc., *for he hath forsaken his people*" (3d person; so the Greek version).

The first count in the indictment against Judah is her superstition. As the Hebrew word for *soothsayer*, very like the word for *east*, appears to have fallen out, we should probably read:

They are full of diviners from the east,
And of soothsayers like the Philistines.

The first term is used of obtaining an oracle by drawing lots, the second is quite obscure; it may suggest divination by watching the clouds, or it may indicate the monotonous croon of the soothsayer, or the glance of the evil eye. These and other forms of superstition are severely condemned and forbidden in Deut. 18:10 ff. Indulgence in such superstitious practices was greatly encouraged by Israel's intercourse, through trade and in other ways, with *foreigners;* the soothsayers are *from the east*, the near east (cf. Balaam), and still more the distant Babylonia, whose diviners were the recognized experts of the ancient world. For *Philistine* divination cf. 1 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kings 1:2. Uzziah's wars with the Philistines (2 Chron. 26:6 f.) would have brought his people into special contact with them.

They strike hands, etc. Any sort of contract with foreigners always involved a menace to the purer religion of Israel, and was therefore deprecated by the prophets (cf. Hos. 7:8; Num. 23:9). It has been suggested, however, with some probability, that this word has displaced an original word of somewhat similar sound, meaning "they practise sorcery."

7. Uzziah had recovered Elath, the port on the northeasterly arm of the Red Sea (2 Kings 14:22); the **silver** and **gold** are the

Their land also is full of horses,
Neither is there any end of their chariots.
8. Their land also is full of idols;
They worship the work of their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made.
9. And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought low:
Therefore forgive them not.
10. Enter into the rock,
And hide thee in the dust,
From before the terror of the LORD
And from the glory of his majesty.[1]

[1] Gr. here properly inserts, *when he arises to shake the earth* (cf. vss. 19, 21).

result of foreign trade, the **horses** and **chariots** would be necessary in Uzziah's wars (2 Chron. 26 : 6–15). All alike would beget a confidence in material resources, and divert Judah from faith in her unseen God.

8. Superstition (vs. 6), wealth (vs. 7), idolatry (vs. 8). The idolatry goes naturally with the superstition. The prophet has nothing but scorn (cf. 40 : 19, 20) for worshippers who bow down before the creations of their own hands. Such hand-made gods are no gods — mere *nothings*, as the Hebrew word suggests.

The frequent repetition of the word *full* in vss. 6–8 is very impressive; Judah is full of practices, influences, possessions, which drive her from her God and compel him to reject her.

9. It does not seem natural to explain the being **bowed down** and **brought low** of the people being *sunk* in superstition. It is more probable, especially in view of vs. 10, which urges the people to hide from the awful presence of Jehovah, that the doom is here pronounced for the first time. The language, though briefer, strongly resembles vss. 11, 17, and still more 5 : 15; perhaps originally ran "the mean man *shall be* bowed down," etc. The last clause of the verse is probably corrupt; it is difficult to assign a really satisfactory meaning to it. The last clause of the corresponding verse, 5 : 15, is more satisfactory.

10. In view of the inevitable doom, the prophet bids the people flee from the terrible avenging Jehovah, to the caves in the limestone rocks, in which men were wont to seek safety from their enemies (1 Sam. 13 : 6).

11. The lofty looks of men shall be brought low,
And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

12. For there shall be a day of the LORD of hosts
Upon all that is proud and haughty,
And upon all that is lifted up : [1] and it shall be brought low :
13. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan ;
14. And upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills that are lifted up ;
15. And upon every lofty tower,
And upon every fenced wall ;

[1] Gr. *and high.*

11 f. **That day** is the day of judgment, the great *day of Jehovah*, described so powerfully in the following verses. To the people, it meant the day of judgment upon Israel's enemies (cf. Amos 5 : 18 ff.); to the early prophets, with their *moral* conception of Jehovah (cf. 1 : 17), it meant the day of judgment upon Israel herself. There is no one in all the universe that is really exalted but Jehovah (6 : 1) ; all that seems or pretends to be exalted — whether persons or things — must therefore be thrown remorselessly down in " that day," which is coming " upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is *high and lifted up* " (so Gr). The passage finely illustrates Isaiah's conception of the lonely majesty and exaltation of God.

13–16. Again (as in vss. 6–8, with their impressive repetition of *full*) the swing and cadence of the poem can be distinctly felt through the English translation ; upon the cedars, upon the mountains, upon the towers, upon the ships, the judgment shall fall. The storm, which lays these lofty things low, begins, as in Ps. 29, in the north: it sweeps through the forests, prostrating the mightiest trees ; across the cities, levelling their towers and walls ; over the seas, wrecking the giant ships. These allusions have perhaps a special as well as a general point: the cedars and oaks would contribute to the luxury of the palatial homes of Judah, the towers

16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all pleasant imagery.
17. And the loftiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.
18. And the idols shall utterly pass away.
19. And men shall go into the caves of the rocks,
And into the holes of the earth,
From before the terror of the LORD,
And from the glory of his majesty,
When he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
20. In that day a man shall cast away his idols of silver,

and walls suggest the fortifications of Uzziah and Jotham, and the ships recall Uzziah's fleet. Uzziah held Elath, a harbor of great commercial importance (2 Kings 14:22), and must have possessed a fleet. **Ships of Tarshish**, primarily ships built (by the Phœnicians) to go to Tartessus in Spain, came to mean simply large merchant-ships. **Imagery** has been explained as ornamental work on the ships, or as works of art carried by the ships; perhaps it simply conceals another word for *ships*, parallel to the ships of the first clause.

17 f. Again the refrain; cf. vs. 11. The whole passage grandly suggests the might of the great storm-god, and by implication the impotence of men. In that day, when his storm sweeps across the world, it will be patent to the proudest eyes that Jehovah alone is exalted, and the folly of idolatry (cf. vs. 8), of worshipping **idols**, *nothings*, will be obvious; the storm will sweep them, too, away.

19. **And they** (not *men*) **shall go into the caves of the rocks.** Who? In this context, apparently the idols (vs. 18); and with this idea it is supposed that vs. 20 which, unlike the poetic context, is in pure prose, was added by a later hand, to show how the idols got into the caves, viz. through having been thrown to the moles and the bats. Having regard, however, to the very similar vs. 10, it seems altogether probable that this verse, of which vs. 21 is practically a duplicate, originally began with an imperative: *Enter into the caves of the rocks*, etc. There is an infinite pathos about this refrain, for how can puny man, by any device, hope to escape (cf. Ps. 139:7) the terrible presence of Jehovah, *when he rises to affright the earth*, as he did in the ever memorable earthquake of Uzziah's reign?

and his idols of gold, which they made for him to
worship, to the moles and to the bats;
21. To go into the caverns of the rocks,
And into the clefts of the ragged rocks,
From before the terror of the LORD,
And from the glory of his majesty,
When he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
22. [1] Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils;
for wherein is he to be accounted of?

A Reign of Anarchy (3:1–15)

3. For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Doth take away from Jerusalem and from Judah
Stay and staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole

[1] This vs. is not in Gr.

22. This verse, which is not in the Greek version, is a conclusion drawn from the previous description of the majestic omnipotence of God. Cease — the readers are reminded — from trusting in man: his life is but a breath (cf. Gen. 2:7), and he is of no account whatever. This is the comment that rises naturally to the mind of any reader fresh from the description of the devastating storm.

3:1–15. Already, in Chap. 2, we have seen the storm sweep across Judah, and we have also seen something of the sin which made its coming inevitable. In Chap. 3 the doom is again proclaimed, and the sins — here injustice rather than superstition and pride — again enumerated, though the order of the sin and doom in this chapter is reversed. The doom is here described (vss. 1–7) as social and political chaos, though whether that is to be effected from without, as, for example, by an invasion of the Assyrians, or from within, by revolution, is not clearly stated — indeed the one often gave opportunity for the other. The passage comes no doubt from the reign of Ahaz, and that reign had not advanced far till Isaiah had witnessed in the northern kingdom the very confusion he here describes (2 Kings 15) — invasion and revolution, with consequent confusion and anarchy, went hand in hand; and Isaiah foresees here for Judah a fate similar to that of her sister to the north. The guilt which justifies the doom is described in vss. 8–15.

2. staff of water, the mighty man, and the man of war;
The judge, and the prophet, and the diviner, and the [1] ancient:
3. The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor,
And the [2] cunning [3] artificer, and the skilful enchanter.
4. And I will give children to be their princes,

[1] m. *elder.* [2] SV *expert.* [3] m. *charmer.*

1. The doom is to be executed by Jehovah as Sovereign, **the Lord**; and it is to take the form of the removal of all the "pillars" of the state — military, administrative, political, religious. How they are to be removed we are not told, perhaps by assassination, perhaps by the captivity that would naturally follow a foreign invasion of the land; but, however that might be, their removal would mean the collapse of the whole social fabric. **Stay and staff** not unaptly render the Hebrew, which repeats its word twice, first in the masculine and then in the feminine, to indicate the completeness of the doom. The "stay and the staff" are those on whom the country *leans* — such officials as are enumerated in the two following verses; there can therefore be little doubt that "stay *of bread* and staff *of water*," with its somewhat irrelevant outlook on famine and drought, is a later and rather inappropriate addition, suggested, perhaps, by such passages as Ps. 105:16; Lev. 26:26. In Isaiah's own words (contrast the opening verse, 1:1) Jerusalem always precedes Judah; the capital city illustrates on a brilliant scale the sins that stained the whole land.

2, 3. In the enumeration of the officials no order is observable, though it is significant that the military men come first, and that the prophet and diviner or soothsayer (condemned, by implication, in the restored text of 2:6, "*soothsayers* from the east") are mentioned together. The prophets as a whole are unworthy men (cf. 28:7 ff.), with whom such men as Isaiah and Amos (7:14) can have little in common. The absence of the priest from this list is curious, and the mention of *the wise magician* (as we should perhaps translate instead of "**the cunning artificer**") and of **the skilful enchanter** as among the *supports* of the state is certainly very ominous (cf. 2:6).

4, 5. The withdrawal of the officials, among whom were *elders*

And babes shall rule over them.
5. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another,
And every one by his neighbour:
The child shall behave himself proudly against the [1] ancient,
And the base against the honourable.
6. When a man shall take hold of his brother
In the house of his father, *saying*,
"Thou hast clothing,
Be thou our ruler,
And let this ruin be
Under thy hand:"
7. In that day shall he lift up *his voice*, saying,
"I will not be an healer;
For in my house is neither bread nor clothing:
Ye shall not make me ruler of the people."

[1] m. *elder*.

(vs. 2), throws the reins of government into the hands of *young* men, inexperienced, capricious, and insolent; "*caprice* shall rule over them," *i.e.* youths whose whim is their law, and who care nothing for justice. Indeed, the tyranny and insolence become general; age and honor count for nothing in the general confusion and dissolution of society.

6. In the welter, things come to such a pass that no one will accept office, even when it is thrust upon him. The country is nothing but a "heap of *ruins*"; and the verse seems to imply that the people, recognizing that such a state of anarchy can no longer continue, offer the leadership to a member, apparently, of one of the noble houses referred to in vss. 2, 3 — to one who possesses a robe *of office*, if Marti's plausible emendation ("*thy* father" for "*his* father") and interpretation be accepted:

When one takes hold of his brother (-citizen),
Saying, "*In thy father's house is a robe* of office;
Come, do thou be our leader," etc.

7. But not all their vigor and violence (vs. 6) can induce him to accept office. He *lifts up* (*his voice*) in protest. How can he

8. For Jerusalem is ruined,
And Judah is fallen:
Because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of his glory.
9. [1] The shew of their countenance
Doth witness against them;
And they declare their sin as Sodom,
They hide it not.
Woe unto their soul!
For they have rewarded evil unto themselves.
10. Say ye of the righteous, that *it shall be* well *with him:*
For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
11. Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be* ill *with him:*

[1] m. *their respecting of persons.*

who, as a result of the anarchy, has no resources of his own, help a confused and resourceless people? He cannot heal (lit. *bind up*, same word as in 1:6) the wounds of a country so torn: *ye shall not make me leader.*

8. **Jerusalem is ruined** (cf. vs. 6) — not yet in reality, but to the clear eyes of the prophet, she is as good as ruined: a political chaos (1–7) in consequence of her having become a moral chaos, or, as Isaiah puts it, because her words and deeds are against Jehovah. Her people forget that *the eyes of his glory*, which pierce beneath the show and surface of things, are upon them — watching alike the cruelty practised upon the poor, and the superfluous finery with which the proud and haughty dames of Jerusalem walk up and down her streets. Such sights **provoke** those glorious eyes.

9. The great sin here, as so often in Isaiah (cf. 1:17), is the miscarriage of justice. In the presence of the great Judge, who in vs. 13 sets up his tribunal, these earthly ministers of justice stand self-condemned: *their partiality* (lit. *respect of persons*, rather than **the show of their countenance**) witnesses against them; they play into the hands of the rich and exploit the poor. Before the bar of the divine Judge, they in this way *announce their sin undisguisedly*, and thus *bring evil upon themselves.*

10, 11. These verses sound weak in so powerful a context. Besides, they make a distinction between the destinies of the good

For the reward of his hands shall be given him.

12. As for my people, children are their oppressors,
And [1] women rule over them.
O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err,
And destroy the way of thy paths.

13. The LORD standeth up to plead,

[1] Gr. *extortioners.*

and the bad, which is not recognized in the preceding verses, where the evils of anarchy fall upon all alike. The Greek translators felt the difficulty of the verses, and endeavored to connect them more definitely with the context. They are in all probability a later addition, and even the text does not appear to have been well preserved. The original may have run:

Happy is the righteous! for it is well with him . . .
Woe to the wicked! for it is ill with him, etc.

12. The divine pity for the crushed and misguided people finds forcible expression in the twice repeated **my people** at the beginning and the middle of the verse. The first line is usually rendered "children are their oppressors" (or "a child is their oppressor"), and "women rule over them" (*i.e.* the people; or *him* — the child-king). The child — whether in years or in character — is taken to refer to Ahaz, who was young when he ascended the throne (2 Kings 16:2), and the women would be those of the harem, or perhaps the queen-mother. "Child," however, is not usually represented by the Hebrew word found here, which is the participle of a verb meaning "to deal severely with," and, as Marti points out, the words may equally mean *their rulers deal harshly with them,* and in the next clause the word rendered "women" may equally well be rendered by *usurers,* oppressors (cf. vs. 15), and was so taken by the Greek translators. It is a pity that the meaning of so important a verse should be ambiguous. On the common view, the passage could be safely assigned to a period very early in the reign of Ahaz; but on any view it comes almost certainly from his reign. The disastrous effects of his weak and vacillating policy are apparent.

O my people, those who should lead thee straight, lead thee astray. The leaders had themselves confused the paths, so that the people did not know how to walk or where to turn. It is interesting to note how the prophets hold the leaders in large measure responsible for the moral condition of the people; leaders should lead.

13, 14. The divine judgment, hinted at in vs. 9, is here explicitly

And standeth to judge[1] the peoples,
14. The LORD will enter into judgement
With the elders of his people, and the princes thereof:
"It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard;
The spoil of the poor is in your houses:
15. What mean ye that ye crush my people,
And grind the face of the poor?"
Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

[1] Gr. *his people.*

set forth, — *Jehovah takes his stand* for the trial, to judge (not perhaps **peoples**, but rather, with Gr.) *his people*. In particular, he enters into judgment with the leading men, in their two representative classes — **the elders**, who represented the traditional order of things, and **the princes**, the official representatives of the monarchical government. It was their business to protect the people, here compared to a vineyard (cf. Chap. 5), from depredation; instead of that, *as for you* (very emphatic; you, its divinely constituted defenders), *you have yourselves devoured it*, in the sense explained in the remaining clause of the verse and vs. 15, by cruelly plundering the poor; the evidence is incontrovertible, for *the spoil is in your houses*.

15. *What do you mean*, the prophet indignantly asks in the name of his God, *by crushing my people, and by grinding*, as between the upper and the nether millstone, *the face of the poor?* Again the prophetic interest in the poor. The fierce vigor of the language here recalls the similar passages in Amos (4:1) and, still more, Micah 3:2, 3.

This passage (vss. 1–15) is a very graphic description of the misery of a state given over to anarchy, and it is significant that here, as so often, the crime, of which such anarchy is the awful chastisement, is simply social injustice. When the faces of the poor are being ground, revolution and anarchy are not far off. The moral insight of the passage is as keen as its descriptive power is great.

3:16–4:1. With his customary insight, Isaiah, like Amos (4:1), sees that for the moral depravity of a people the women must bear a heavy share of responsibility. Appropriately enough he here turns to them and, in terms scarcely less scathing than those of Amos, he satirizes their haughtiness and conceit, as it is expressed in their stylish dress and coquettish manner, and pronounces upon them his terrible word of doom.

The Doom of the Haughty Women (3 : 16–4 : 1)

16. Moreover the LORD said,
Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with stretched forth necks
And wanton eyes,
Walking and mincing as they go,
And making a tinkling with their feet:
17. Therefore the LORD will smite with a scab the crown
of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.
18. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of
19. their anklets, and the [1] cauls, and the crescents: the
20. pendants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers; the
headtires, and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and
21. the perfume boxes, and the amulets; the rings, and the
22. nose jewels; the festival robes and the mantles, and
23. the shawls, and the satchels; the [2] hand mirrors, and
the fine linen, and the turbans, and the veils.

[1] m. *networks*. [2] Gr. *transparent dresses*.

16, 17. Zion, on which the royal palace and temple were built, would be, as Duhm says, the fashionable quarter. It is therefore **the daughters of Zion**, the fine ladies, whom the prophet here lashes with his scorn. They are haughty (lit. *high*), and, as they strut along, with outstretched neck, and tinkling anklets to attract attention, and eyes coquettishly turned upon the passers-by, they forget — if ever they knew — the truth which in Chap. 2 the prophet had proclaimed with such terrible earnestness, that a day of Jehovah is coming upon all that is proud and haughty (2 : 12); and then, reduced by the exigencies of war or by the prevailing anarchy, to destitution, he will smite with disease (the scab) the heads that were once so fair, and expose the once haughty dames to the licentious insults of the rabble.

18–23. It is now generally recognized that this prosaic inventory of a Hebrew woman's articles of dress and toilet, interrupting as it does the terse and solemn poetry on both sides of it, is from some

24. And it shall come to pass,
That instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness,
And instead of a girdle a rope;
And instead of well set hair baldness;
And instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth;
Branding instead of beauty.
25. Thy men shall fall by the sword,
And thy mighty in the war.
26. And her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she shall be [1] desolate and sit upon the ground.
4. And seven women shall take hold
Of one man in that day, saying,

[1] m. *emptied.*

later hand than that of Isaiah. The number of apparently foreign words shows the powerful influence of foreign customs, and explains the prophetic dread of "striking hands with foreigners" (2:6, cf. Zeph. 1:8).

24. The poem is here resumed. *For perfume there shall be rottenness, and for a girdle the* captive's *rope. . . . Burning* — perhaps the brand of a slave — *for beauty.*

25, 26. In these verses it would seem as if, for the moment, the women were forgotten, and some city, no doubt Jerusalem, is being apostrophized, her young men slain, her gates mourning that the people who had gathered there are now no more, the city herself emptied (of her men) and sitting, like an uncrowned queen, upon the ground. The passage recalls the spirit and language of Lamentations (cf. 2:10). Note the change in these verses from the second to the third person.

4:1. The case of the women is now resumed, and the description of their fate continued. Exposed as they are to insult on every side, their plight will be so desperate that seven of them, with a violence much like that of those who were in search of a man to stem the tide of anarchy (3:6), will lay hold of any man they meet, and beseech him to marry them, not for support — that they will find for themselves — but for the protection that his name will throw around the one whom he makes his wife. And this — humiliation and despair — is the end of the haughty women who tripped so daintily through the streets of Jerusalem!

"We will eat our own bread,
And wear our own apparel:
Only let us be called by thy name;
Take thou away our reproach."

Zion's Final Glory (4:2–6)

2. In that day
Shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious,
And the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely
For them that are escaped of Israel.

4:2–6. This description of the golden age, in which Jerusalem will enjoy the visible presence of Jehovah, at once protected and glorified by it, is a foil to the preceding chapters (2 and 3) with their melancholy story of Judah's idolatry, pride, and injustice. Every one can see that there is no real inner connection between the two descriptions. The prospect announced in vss. 2–6 was hardly likely to be realized *in that day* — the day of anarchy and calamity described in Chap. 3. *That day* is in reality the golden age to which especially the later writers look forward, and the passage is an independent piece. This picture of the ideal Jerusalem of the latter days is set very effectively, and no doubt deliberately, beside the picture of the real Jerusalem with its venal judges, its crushed poor, its proud men, its haughty women; and like the similar passage in 2:1–5, it forms a very appropriate conclusion to the group (2:6–4:6). The "daughters of Zion" (vs. 4) form the connecting link between this section and the last (3:16). Many features of the passage — the "holiness" of the people of Jerusalem, the reminiscence of the Mosaic age in the delineation of the ideal, etc. — seem to point to a post-exilic date. The later age loved to supplement the sternness of an ancient prophet's message by words of hope and consolation.

2. In a prophecy of the Messianic age, it is from a modern point of view surprising to find the initial emphasis thrown upon the fertility of the land, for there can be no doubt that the phrase **the fruit of the land** is to be interpreted literally. It is only to the phrase **the branch of Jehovah** that doubt can attach. This has often been interpreted personally — of the Messiah, and the personal use of the word *branch* in Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12, lends a certain plausibility to this interpretation. But the context, in which the ambiguous phrase is parallel to the unambiguous *fruit of the land*, practically puts the literal interpretation

3. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion,
And he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy,
Even every one that is written [1] among the living in Jerusalem:
4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion,
And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof,
By the [2] spirit of judgement, and by the [2] spirit of burning.

[1] m. *unto life.* [2] m. *blast.*

beyond all doubt, and *that which Jehovah causes to sprout* (as the words literally mean) will be the wild vegetation, for which *man* does nothing (Ps. 104: 14), as opposed to the cultivated fruits of the land (Deut. 8: 8). There will be supernatural fertility in the latter days **for them that are escaped of Israel**, that is, for those who escape the final judgment (Joel 2: 32).

3. Those who are left in Jerusalem shall be **called** (because they shall *be;* the name is a real index to the thing) **holy** — probably in the technical sacerdotal sense as well as in the moral. To later hope and imagination, the people of Jerusalem appeared as Jehovah's priests for the whole world (61: 6). They are his "holy people" (62: 12) — not indeed all of them, but *every one who is registered unto life.* The idea of the "book of life" (Ps. 69: 28, cf. Exod. 32: 32 f.; Mal. 3: 16; Dan. 12: 1), in which were recorded the names of all who would "live," that is, survive the final judgment, was suggested by the register in which the names of citizens were recorded (cf. Neh. 7: 64). In Ps. 87: 6, the civic and spiritual ideas are suggestively blended.

4. This verse goes with vs. 3. The golden age will come, *when the Lord shall have washed away the impurity, etc.* Men and women were guilty alike — the men of "bloody crimes" (Ezek. 7: 23), especially against the poor (Jer. 2: 34). They are to be cleansed by the mighty *blast* (or **spirit** — the spirit being conceived as the medium or agent) **of judgment**, which is *a blast of extermination* (rather than **burning**); that is, it is a judgment which "puts away" (Deut. 13: 5, same word as here) the evil from the midst of the congregation.

5. And the LORD will [1] create over the whole habitation
of Mount Zion,
And over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day,
And the shining of a flaming fire by night:
For over all the glory *shall be spread* a canopy.
6. And there shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the daytime from the heat,
And for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain.

THE VINEYARD WITH THE WILD GRAPES (5:1–30)

The Song of the Vineyard (5:1–7)

5. Let me sing [2] for my wellbeloved a song
Of my beloved touching his vineyard.

[1] Gr. *come.* [2] Or *of.*

5. Instead of **create** we should probably read, with the Greek, *come*, by the omission of a single letter. *And Jehovah will come* and his presence will rest *upon the whole site of Mount Zion and upon her* holy *convocations as* (or *in*) *a cloud by day, and as smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night.* The sublimest feature of those future golden days would be the visible presence of Jehovah himself with his people, and that in a form which recalled the high privilege of the Mosaic age (Exod. 13:21, 22). That presence would be to the people at once protection and glory.

6. With this verse should be taken perhaps the last clause of vs. 5, *for over all* the holy city and mountain *the glory* of Jehovah (that is, the cloud and the flame of fire) *will be canopy and covering* (lit. **pavilion**), — *a shade from the heat, a refuge and shelter from storm and rain.* The storm and rain typify floods of disaster or oppression (cf. 25:4). Probably, with the Greek, *in the daytime* should be omitted.

There is much that is attractive in this vision of the future. True, it embraces the fertility of the land — a certain healthy materialism is seldom absent from the Old Testament conception of blessedness — but its inhabitants are a people whose sins have been washed away, and whose life is overshadowed by the presence of their God.

5:1–30. The prophecies of which Chap. 5 is composed, having

My wellbeloved had a vineyard
In a very fruitful hill:
2. And he made a trench about it, and gathered out
the stones thereof,
And planted it with the choicest vine,
And built a tower in the midst of it,

Mat. 21:33
Mk. 12:2
Lk. 20:9

no connection either with Chap. 4 or Chap. 6, appear to form an independent group, and probably belong, like Chaps. 2 and 3, to Isaiah's earlier period; but, early as they are, they already show literary power and moral insight of the most splendid kind. In Isaiah the poet was no less great than the prophet.

5:1–7. We are to suppose the prophet appearing — probably in the temple on the occasion of some festival — before a great gathering drawn from the capital and the country towns of Judah (vs. 3). He skilfully attracts their attention by proposing to sing a song whose theme is the vineyard of a friend of his. As the song advances, the bitter truth gradually discloses itself. The friend is Jehovah, the vineyard is Judah, which, because of the miserable fruit she has produced, will be laid utterly waste.

1, 2. These verses have been admirably rendered by Professor Cheyne:

A song will I sing of my friend,
A love-song touching his vineyard.
A vineyard belongs to my friend,
On a hill that is fruitful and sunny;
He digged it, and cleared it of stones,
And planted there vines that are choice;
A tower he built in the midst,
And hewed also therein a wine-vat;
And he looked to find grapes that are good,
Alas! it bore grapes that are wild.

A translation like this, with rhythm and real poetic flavor, helps us to feel how little justice is done the poetry of the great prophets by the average prose translation.

The vineyard was on *a very fruitful hill* (lit. *a horn, the son of oil*). Everything was therefore in its favor from the beginning; in addition, the most affectionate effort had been spent upon it. A substantial **tower** (and not merely a hut, cf. 1:8) had been built for the watchmen, and a wine-vat had been hewn out in the rock, into which the juice flowed from the wine-press above. The friend had naturally set high hopes upon a vineyard so carefully tended, but the grapes it produced were poor (lit. evil-smelling).

And also hewed out a [1] winepress therein:
And he looked that it should bring forth grapes,
And it brought forth wild grapes.

3. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem,
And men of Judah,
Judge, I pray you, betwixt me
And my vineyard.
4. What could have been done more to my vineyard,
That I have not done in it?
Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes,
Brought it forth wild grapes?

5. And now go to; I will tell you
What I will do to my vineyard:
I will take away the hedge thereof,
And it shall be eaten up:
I will break down the fence thereof,
And it shall be trodden down:
6. And I will lay it waste;
It shall not be pruned nor hoed;
But there shall come up briers and thorns:
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain upon it.

[1] m. SV *winevat*.

3, 4. The prophet, now in the rôle of the friend, appeals to the crowd. Had he not a right to expect the best of his vineyard? Had he not done for it all that could be done? He leaves it to their sense of justice to declare what such a vineyard deserves.

5, 6. As in the very similar parable of our Lord, the men appealed to are silent (Luke 20:15 f.); and the owner himself goes on to describe its fate, using impersonal verbs which render the Hebrew words very vivid, calling attention, as they do, simply to

7. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house
of Israel,
And the men of Judah his pleasant plant:
And he looked for judgement, but behold oppression;
For righteousness, but behold a cry.

Woe! (5:8–24)

8. Woe unto them that join house to house,
That lay field to field,

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the awful *fact:* — the *removal* of the protecting hedge, the *demolition* of the encircling wall, so that the once lovely height is now exposed to the trampling of beasts. And now it will be as deliberately neglected as formerly it was cared for, and for the future, its desolation will be guaranteed, for no rain will fall upon it. Now *Jehovah* is clearly the friend, as he alone is lord of the rain.

7. The grim meaning of the song which began so tenderly is now obvious enough, but Isaiah states it in plain terms in a climax of great power. The men before him are the vineyard, and their God is the disappointed Friend. His disappointment is expressed in a play upon words which it is impossible to reproduce in English — G. H. Box suggests for the last pair *right* and *riot;* but the two words of each group, sounding almost exactly alike, and differing only by a single Hebrew letter (*e.g. mishpat* and *mispach*), must have written themselves indelibly upon the memories of those who heard them. He looked for good grapes, and he found wild ones; how like, yet how unlike. He looked for **justice** (*mishpat*) and behold! something that differed little (*mispach*) yet differed infinitely — perhaps **bloodshed**; for *righteousness*, and behold! (a very similar word) a **cry**, the cry of those *unrighteously* oppressed.

The effect of this skilful parable must have been startling, and was no doubt irritating. "God forbid!" (Luke 20:16).

5:8–24. What the wild grapes of the parable really mean is illustrated in the group of woes which follows, seven perhaps originally, though, judging by the brevity of some of them, longer or shorter fragments appear to have been occasionally lost. This artistic and powerful section gives us a vivid glimpse of contemporary society in Judah, and of the vices which corrupted it.

First woe (5:8–10) upon the wealthy land-owners.

8. The tenacity with which the Hebrew peasant clung to his possessions is admirably illustrated by the story of Naboth (1 Kings 21). But the exigencies of poverty, due sometimes to war,

Till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell
Alone in the midst of the land!

9. [1] In mine ears *saith* the LORD of hosts,
Of a truth many houses shall be desolate,
Even great and fair, without inhabitant.

10. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath,
And a homer of seed shall yield *but* an ephah.

11. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning,
That they may follow strong drink;
That tarry late into the night,
Till wine inflame them!

12. And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe,
And wine, *are* in their feasts;

[1] Gr. *these things have been heard in the ears of the Lord of hosts.*

would compel him to cede his property to men of wealth, who would take advantage of the situation to **join house to house** and **lay field to field**, till, the poor being reduced to the position of dependents or slaves, there was *no more room* for any but themselves, and they *were settled alone in the land*. Micah (2:2) similarly denounces the unscrupulousness of men of wealth and power.

9, 10. The callous land-owners think they may continue such conduct with impunity; they are too dull to hear the divine word of doom pronounced upon it. But the sharp ears of Isaiah hear it. *Jehovah has* — perhaps we should add *revealed himself* (cf. 22:14) or *sworn* — **in mine ears**, that the end of these things is desolation, for the land will be cursed with barrenness — a *homer* yielding only an *ephah*, *i.e.* one-tenth part of the seed sown. The *bath* was a liquid measure equal to the ephah, about eight or nine gallons; and this was all that would be yielded by **ten acres**, the word rendered *acre* meaning the land that two oxen could plough in a day. The punishment is in kind: the farm lands unjustly seized prove profitless.

Second woe (5:11–13) — upon the devotees of drink and pleasure.

11, 12. Drinking in the morning was very unusual and specially disgraceful (cf. Eccl. 10:16 f.; Acts 2:15). The carousals are accompanied by music, as in Amos's companion picture (6:5 f.), and had the effect of drowning the moral and spiritual sense.

But they regard not the work of the LORD,
Neither have they considered the operation of his hands.

13. Therefore my people are gone into captivity,
For lack of knowledge:
And their honourable men are [1] famished,
And their multitude are parched with thirst.

14. Therefore [2] hell hath enlarged her desire,
And opened her mouth without measure;
And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp,
And he that rejoiceth among them, descend *into it.*

[1] Heb. *men of hunger;* Gr. *dead with hunger.* [2] Heb. *Sheol.*

They have no perception of the **work of Jehovah**, of the great historical forces then in operation, of the divine purpose that controlled them, of the evil day that for them was so near (vss. 26–29).

13. The end of such besotted stupidity could only be exile. *My people* though they be (1:2), they *shall surely go* (prophetic pf.) *into captivity, for want of knowledge;* or it may be *unaware* — too stupid to know what is really happening to them. *Their nobility shall be consumed with hunger, and their noisy throng parched with thirst.* Here again punished in kind, — for the banquet, the famine.

Third woe (5:14, 17) — upon Jerusalem (?).

Vs. 14, with its *therefore,* does not naturally follow vs. 13 (*therefore,* etc.), whose picture of doom is complete, forming an appropriate and striking conclusion to the second woe. Besides, the suffixes here are feminine (in vs. 13, masc.), pointing apparently to a city. Vss. 14, 17, then, beginning with *therefore,* probably form the conclusion of the third woe (like vs. 13), of which the beginning has been lost. **Hell**, *Sheol*, the underworld, like a ravenous monster, opens her huge jaws to swallow up in everlasting silence the splendor and noise of the joyous, wicked city — a very impressive picture; and on the site where once the city stood, *lambs shall graze,* and — perhaps we should read, omitting one of the Hebrew words — *fatlings* (or *kids;* not **wanderers**) *shall feed in her ruins.*

15. And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty are humbled:
16. But the LORD of hosts is exalted in judgement,
And God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.
17. Then shall the lambs feed as in their pasture,
And the waste places of the fat ones shall [1] wanderers eat.
18. Woe unto them that draw iniquity
With cords of vanity,
And sin as it were with a cart rope:
19. That say, "Let him make speed, let him hasten
His work, that we may see it:
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh
And come, that we may know it!"
20. Woe unto them that call evil good,
And good evil;

[1] Gr. *lambs*.

15, 16. These verses, especially 15, are probably a later insertion. Vs. 15 weakens the effect of the preceding verse, according to which the people are already plunged into Sheol, besides being a reminiscence of 2:11, 17. *The holy God shows himself holy in righteousness, i.e.* by his *righteous* act of judgment upon the wicked city.

Fourth woe (5:18, 19) — upon the sceptics.

18, 19. With the sin is intimately bound up the penalty; and this, though they fondly imagine it will never come (vs. 19), they are actually dragging on, pulling it towards them, as it were, with ropes. They are sceptics, who will not believe in the judgment until they see it; and their scepticism is passing into scorn: *let God make haste!* It is possible that the conclusion of this woe and of the next two (*therefore*, etc.) has been lost.

Fifth woe (5:20) — upon those who subvert the moral order.

20. To these men good and evil have no absolute meaning. That is good which is good, *i.e.* profitable for them, though it may be absolutely bad, *e.g.* their ruthless absorption of the property of the poor (vs. 8). Goodness, in Isaiah's sense of social justice

That put darkness for light,
And light for darkness;
That put bitter for sweet,
And sweet for bitter!

21. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

22. Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine,
And men of strength to mingle strong drink:

23. Which justify the wicked for a reward,
And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24. Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
And as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame,
So their root shall be as rottenness,
And their blossom shall go up as dust:
Because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

(1:17), means *sweetness* and *light;* injustice is bitterness and darkness.

Sixth woe (5:21) — upon the men of conceited intelligence.

21. These were probably politicians, who turned a deaf ear to the prophetic truths on which such men as Isaiah insisted.

Seventh woe (5:22–24) — upon corrupt judges.

22. The sentiment of vs. 22 has occurred already (vs. 11), and the connection between drunkenness and the maladministration of justice, though thoroughly intelligible, fails to concentrate attention upon the single sin, as the other woes do; the place of vs. 22 has therefore been questioned. The men were **mighty**, *heroes*, at the wine-bowl (Amos 6:6); they could spice the wine and drink it valiantly.

23. Justice was bought and sold — one of the root-evils of Oriental society (1:23). For a bribe they acquitted the guilty (the man who was in the *wrong*) and condemned the innocent (the man who was in the *right*).

24. This announcement of doom serves for the conclusion not only of the last woe, but of the whole group. The sinners shall perish as *quickly* as stubble in the flame, the crackling of which one can hear in the Hebrew words with their multiplied *sh*. The

A Foreign Army is Coming (5 : 25–30)

25. Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people,
And he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them,
And the hills did tremble, and their carcases were
As refuse in the midst of the streets.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

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metaphor which describes how they perish, *root and branch*, changes in the next clause. The clause *because they rejected*, etc., which seems very general for so concrete a context, may be intended as a comprehensive summary of all the sins denounced; **the law of Jehovah** will then be the prophetic instruction (cf. 1 : 10).

This group of woes, which is very skilfully composed, shows how strikingly the vices of one civilization resemble those of another. The land question and the drink question belong as truly to our world as to Isaiah's. The paragraph is haunted, too, by a sense of nemesis: the land unjustly acquired would be cursed with barrenness, and the end of the wine-drinkers would be hunger and thirst.

5 : 25–30. This piece, beginning with *therefore*, can hardly be the continuation of the last verse, which began similarly (cf. vss. 13, 14). As the end of vs. 25:

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still,

forms the refrain of the great poem (9 : 8–10 : 4; cf. 9 : 12, 17, etc.), it has been conjectured with much probability that it really belongs to that poem, to which indeed, with its definite announcement of the invasion of Judah by a foreign army, it would form a very powerful conclusion. Even so the position of the section 5 : 25–30, however it came to be where it now is, is by no means inappropriate. It shows how the woes announced in the previous section are to be executed, and fills them with a very terrible meaning.

25. Behind this picture of destruction may lie Isaiah's experience of the earthquake (Amos 1 : 1). "The hills seemed to topple over, and when the living recovered from the shock there lay the dead, flung like refuse about the streets" (G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. I, p. 50). But the hand is still uplifted to strike a yet more

26. And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far,
And will hiss for them from the end of the earth:
And, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:
27. None shall be weary, nor stumble among them:
None shall slumber nor sleep;
Neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed,
Nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:
28. Whose arrows are sharp,
And all their bows bent;
Their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind:
29. Their roaring shall be like a lion,
They shall roar like young lions; yea, they shall roar,
And lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe,
And there shall be none to deliver.
30. And they shall roar against them in that day like the roaring of the sea:
And if one look unto the land, behold darkness *and* distress,
[1] And the light is darkened in the clouds thereof.

[1] Gr. om. *and the light is darkened*, and reads simply *in their perplexity*.

terrible blow; what that will be becomes clear in the splendid description of the Assyrian army that follows. Isaiah does not indeed name them here any more than Amos does in 6:14, but there is no more doubt here than there.

26–29. Jehovah will raise a military signal, as a rendezvous, to *a* **nation from afar**, *i.e.* the Assyrians, and **hiss** to them, as a bee-keeper to attract his bees (cf. 7:18).

And behold! With this appeal the magnificent description of the Assyrian host commences — their rapidity of movement, their unwearied persistence, the excellence of their deadly weapons, the invincible rush of their horses and chariots, their thunderous roar as they leap upon their prey.

30. This verse heightens the terror of Israel's doom, described in vs. 29 — not only defeat, but distress and darkness. As the

The Prophet's Call (Chap. 6)

Rev. 4:2; 5:1

6. In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train

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text, however, appears to be somewhat confused (cf. the Greek version), and the verse strongly resembles 8:22, it has been supposed by some to be a later insertion, consolatory to Israel, describing the fate of the *Assyrian*. "Over *him* there shall be a roaring, etc." For a poetical translation of this passage, see Introduction, p. 13.

Chap. 6. There are few things more impressive in literature than this account of the inaugural vision of Isaiah. In few and simple words he leads us into the august presence of the Lord whose glory fills the whole earth, he lets us hear the music of the choir of the seraphim, he carries us, so far as human words may, into the secret of his call and consecration, and the mysterious atmosphere of the supernatural lies about the whole wonderful scene.

We should expect the story of the call, which came at the beginning of his ministry, to appear at the beginning of his book. There is, however, as we have seen, a certain propriety in Chap. 1 as a frontispiece; besides, it is plain that the story of the call was written some time after his experience of it. Even if it be too much to say that vss. 9 f. are best explained as a retrospective glance at a relatively unsuccessful ministry, the very first sentence, *In the year that King Uzziah died*, seems to look back upon that event from a later day. The chapter was probably intended to introduce the group of prophecies in 7:1–9:7 which gather round Ahaz and the ominous events of 735 B.C.

1. **In the year that King Uzziah died** (740 B.C.). The king who, in the course of his long, brilliant, and successful reign, had done so much for the security and prosperity of Judah (2 Chron. 26), *died*. But Jehovah did not die; in that very year, Isaiah saw him as **the Lord, sitting upon a throne**. The invisible King sits upon an everlasting throne. Isaiah does not attempt to describe him. He does not see him, for his eyes are humbly cast down — he sees nothing but the sweep of his garments. The vision takes place **in the temple**. The word, which may be translated *palace*, has been referred to the heavenly temple (cf. Ps. 11:4), but it is more natural to refer it to the temple at Jerusalem. The young prophet, meditating in the temple upon his country's future and his own, may well have received his revelation there. In any case, the vision is colored by his experience of the temple worship. The majesty and *exaltation* of the Lord have already been powerfully treated in 2:10–19; this is one of the leading thoughts of Isaiah.

2. filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim:
each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face,
and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he
3. did fly. And one cried to another, and said,
"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of his glory."
4. And the foundations of the thresholds were moved

2. The Lord is **sitting**, and his ministers, the seraphim, are **standing**, therefore they appear **above him**. The **seraphim** are not angels. The same word is used of the *serpents* by which the Israelites were plagued in the wilderness (Num. 21:6–9); and when we consider that in antiquity serpents were considered to guard the thresholds of temples, and that at this very time there was a brazen serpent in the temple at Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:4), it is natural to suppose that the seraphim of the vision were in this way suggested to the imagination of the prophet. They were, however, very different in appearance from ordinary serpents, as they had wings — two to cover their faces, for they must not look upon the Lord any more than man may (vs. 5; 1 Kings 19:13), two to cover the nether portions of their body, which would have been otherwise exposed, and two with which they could fly in the service of their Lord (cf. vs. 6).

3. Their song was probably responsive — *one would call to another* — the first line (*Holy . . .*) being answered by the second (*the whole earth . . .*). The word **holy** appears primarily to have involved the idea of separation, and was thus admirably fitted, as an epithet of Deity, to express the distance that separates God from man. He is separated from, and elevated above, the limitations of that which is human. But though the word had originally no moral connotation, it very naturally acquired one in course of time. Human weakness expresses itself conspicuously in sin, and from this, too, God is separated. That the word here involves a moral idea is shown by Isaiah's horror at the consciousness of his guilt in such a *holy* presence. As a consequence of his holiness (in both senses — majesty and purity), his glory fills the whole world; he is Lord alike of nature and of the moral order. The seraphic song is more than a prayer: "Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come." The eyes of those mysterious servants see beyond all the sins and confusions of history, beyond the wicked kingdom and the dead king, to that eternal world where God's name is already hallowed and his kingdom already come.

4. The song is followed by a mysterious shaking, and the temple

Rev. 15:8

at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled
5. with smoke. Then said I,

"Woe is me! for I am undone;
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:
For mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

6. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a
[1] live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the
7. tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it, and said,

"Lo, this hath touched thy lips;
And thine inquity is taken away, and thy sin
[2] purged."

8. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying,

[1] m. *hot stone.* [2] m. *expiated.*

began to fill with smoke — whether from the altar fire (vs. 6), or, as Duhm has suggested, from the mouth of the seraphim (cf. Ezek. 1:13 f.); in either case, perhaps a weird symbol of the divine displeasure with the "man of unclean lips."

5. The shaking, the song, the smoke, above all the holy presence, throw Isaiah into terror. According to an ancient idea, the sight of God brings death (cf. Jud. 13:22, Exod. 19:21); especially does the *unclean* Isaiah feel that he must perish. Besides his own sin, the taint of his environment is upon him — he dwells **in the midst of a people of unclean lips.**

6, 7. His sin is concentrated, as it were, upon his lips, which, to the prophet or preacher, constitute the great instrument of service. Before service is possible, the sin must be burned off these. So, with a *hot stone*, such as was used in transferring heat, one of the seraphic servants, who needs no bidding from his Lord, touched the sinful lips, burnt up the sin upon them, and solemnly pronounces that it is now **purged**, removed, *covered*. It is interesting and of great significance that, although the scene of this forgiveness is the temple, it is effected without sacrifice.

8. It is the consecrated man who hears the divine voice, and the

"Whom shall I send,
And who will go for us?"
Then I said,
"Here am I; send me."

9. And he said,
"Go, and tell this people,
'Hear ye indeed, but understand not;
And see ye indeed, but perceive not.'
10. Make the heart of this people fat,
And make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes;
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed."

Mat. 13:14 f.
Mk. 4:12
Lk. 8:10
Acts. 28:26 f.
Jn. 12:40

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words which he hears are a call to service. The impulse to service is the first effect of fellowship with God; and Isaiah answers the call without hesitation or compromise — **behold me, send me** — though he does not know in detail what it may involve. The divine voice is not addressed specially to him; he has no special call. The need of the world constitutes the call, and the consecrated man hears it. The service of God is the service of man; in going *for us*, he goes *to the people* (vs. 9). **For us**, *i.e.* for the supernatural beings, the "sons of God," the heavenly council, by whom in earlier times Jehovah was conceived as being surrounded (Job 1:6).

9, 10. The task upon which he is sent is surprising and painful — to deliver a message which will be *continually* rejected. The more he would preach, the more dull and callous would his hearers become — eyes *smeared*, ears *heavy*, hearts unfeeling — till no healing would be possible. The words, put here in the imperative form, are to be explained not so much as a command, but rather as the statement of a great law — that if men, under the influence of preaching, do not grow more responsive, they will grow more callous. The penalty of their indifference is simply that they will be confirmed in it, until all spiritual receptivity is lost. It has seemed to some that the enthusiastic prophet can hardly have been launched upon his ministry with a prospect so hopeless, but that in later days he read his subsequent experience back into his call. That may be; but there was enough in the life-story of predecessors like Elijah and Amos to keep so sane and clear-eyed

11. Then said I,
"Lord, how long?"
And he answered,
"Until cities be waste without inhabitant,
And houses without man,
And the land [1] become utterly waste,
12. And the LORD have removed men far away,
And the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land.
13. And if there be yet a tenth in it,
It shall again be [2] eaten up:
As a terebinth, and as an oak,
Whose stock remaineth when they are felled:
[3] So the holy seed is the stock thereof."

[1] Gr. *be left.* [2] m. *burnt.* [3] Gr. om.

a man as Isaiah from cherishing too sanguine hopes as to the success of his ministry.

11, 12. The earnest preaching and the callous reception of it would continue until the land was reduced to a *desolation.* The kingdom of God cannot come until this obdurate generation is wiped out; war and exile will do the work.

13. The work will be well done; should it happen that any fraction of the people survives, that too will, in its turn, be destroyed, just as, after a tree has been felled, the stump is burned. This very graphic statement of the completeness of the destruction has its point quite blunted by the last clause, **the holy seed is the stock thereof**, which is clearly intended to mitigate the preceding judgment (cf. 2:1–4; 4:2–6). It is hardly possible that the verse can be Isaiah's. In answer to the assertion that it resembles his doctrine of the remnant that is to be saved and form the nucleus of the new community and so may be Isaiah's own, it may be said that, besides being in contradiction with vs. 11 and with the terrible picture that immediately precedes it (vs. 13), the words are not found in the Greek version. This would suggest that the addition is perhaps as late as the second century B.C.

Isaiah believes in the sovereignty of God and his control of history. He began his prophetic work with the vision of the Lord upon his throne; and amid all the disappointments, changes, and

The Crisis of 735 B.C. (7 : 1–9 : 7)

The Prophet's Word to the Terrified King (7 : 1–9)

7. And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah,

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confusions of the forty years during which he served his God and his wilful people, that vision sustained him, imparting to his long career something of the serenity and majesty of the God whom his young eyes had seen at the beginning, in his inaugural vision.

7 : 1–9 : 6. This group of prophecies introduces us to a great crisis in the history of Judah, and shows us how differently that crisis was met by the prophet (Isaiah) and the King (Ahaz). In 735 B.C. — and earlier perhaps also, cf. 2 Kings 15 : 37 — a combined assault was made upon Judah by Aram (Syria) and Israel. We are not expressly told the reason of this assault, but there can be no doubt that it was an attempt to force Judah to join a western confederacy which was forming to resist the aggressions of Assyria. Through her famous temple at Jerusalem and her unbroken Davidic dynasty, Judah enjoyed a certain strength and stability, and her presence or absence meant much to the confederacy. Judah was not unnaturally terrified by the assault; the heart of king and people "shook as shake the forest trees before the wind" (Is. 7 : 2), and Ahaz, in his anxiety, begins to cherish thoughts of calling in the powerful aid of Assyria (2 Kings 16 : 6 f.); Isaiah's attempt to dissuade him witnesses as strongly to his political sagacity as to his religious faith. The prophet saw that, in any case, the Assyrian would in his own interest march against the western nations that were planning to defy him, so that Judah, if only she "kept quiet" (7 : 4), had in reality nothing to fear from Aram and Israel; and further, the request of Ahaz gave the Assyrian just the chance he was only too anxious to embrace, of interfering in the politics of Judah.

The tense and graphic scenes (7 : 3–17) show how much Isaiah conceived to be at stake in the attitude of Ahaz, and how highly wrought is his soul over the crisis.

Chap. 7 is appropriately preceded by Chap. 6. Isaiah must have his vision of the Lord upon his throne before he can face the King of Judah.

1. This historical introduction is probably borrowed from 2 Kings 16 : 5. **The king of Syria** (Aram), always mentioned first

king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against
it; but could not prevail against it. And it was told
2. the house of David, saying, "Syria is [1] confederate
with Ephraim." And his heart[2] was moved, and the
heart of his people, as the trees of the forest[2] are moved
3. with the wind. Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, "Go
forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy
son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the
4. highway of the fuller's field; and say unto him,
'Take heed and be quiet;
Fear not, neither let thine heart be faint,

[1] Heb. *rests on* (perhaps *is encamped on*). [2] SV *tremble(d)*.

throughout the passage, appears to have been the more important member of the confederacy. Aram (known as *Syria* in the English version) is, roughly speaking, the country northeast of Israel, whose chief city was Damascus.

2. **Is confederate with**, lit. *is settling down upon*, like swarms of insects (vs. 19). The Syrians are already in **Ephraim**, *i.e.* Israel, preparatory to their united descent upon Judah — with the result that the hearts of king, court, and people *are shaken as shake the forest trees before the wind;* finely symbolic of the fear and *instability* (cf. vs. 9) of those who have not, like Isaiah, seen the Lord upon his throne, and who do not, like him, *believe* (vs. 9) in a sovereign Providence.

3. Isaiah's is the only heart that does not flutter. He is divinely prompted to go out to meet Ahaz, who is to be found **at the end of the conduit, etc.**, apparently at the southeast corner of the city, to which he had gone probably to inspect the water supply in view of the expected siege. The prophet takes with him his son **Shear-jashub**, whose name means *a remnant shall turn* (*i.e.* to Jehovah), and who is therefore in his own person, even though no words be spoken, a living embodiment of Isaiah's message of judgment and hope for a better Israel to be. The meeting of Isaiah and Ahaz is very suggestive; the faithful and the vacillating, representatives of opposite views of the world — faith in the supremacy of God and faith in the supremacy of human scheming.

4. **Take heed, and keep calm.** It was well enough for Ahaz to look to his defences, but there was no need for him to be *faint-*

Because of these two tails of smoking fire-brands,
For the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.
5. Because Syria hath counselled evil against thee,
Ephraim *also*, and the son of Remaliah, saying,
6. "Let us go up against Judah and vex it,
And let us make a breach therein for us,
And set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel:"
7. Thus saith the Lord GOD,
'It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.
8. For the head of Syria is Damascus,
And the head of Damascus is Rezin:
And within threescore and five years
Shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, that it be not a people:
9. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
And the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.

hearted, because his two opponents were literally but the **tails**, or stumps, **of smoking firebrands**, already exhausted through former wars with the Assyrians and incapable now of kindling a blaze in Judah. Pekah, **the son of Remaliah**, who assassinated his predecessor Pekahiah (2 Kings 15: 25), is a usurper, too contemptible even to mention by name.

6. Their plan was to *break into* Judah, and to overthrow the dynasty, setting up, in place of Ahaz, one whose name — the son of **Tabeel** — suggests that he was a Syrian. With a Syrian king, Judah would be more easily coerced into the confederacy.

7. But **the Lord Jehovah** has his plans, as well as the two kings; and in his name, Isaiah announces that their plan is doomed to failure.

8, 9. The rhythm and the thought of these verses is interrupted by the second clause of vs. 8, which, with a definiteness unusual, if not unparalleled in prophecy proper, announces the destruction of Israel's national existence within sixty-five years (*i.e.* about 670 B.C.). The passage appears to be a late insertion, having in view the introduction of foreign colonists to Samaria by Esarhaddon (681–668 B.C.; Ezr. 4: 2), or possibly his successor

If ye will not believe,
Surely ye shall not be established.' "

The Great Refusal and the Sign (7 : 10–16)

10, 11. And the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, "Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the

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Assurbanipal (Ezr. 4 : 10). When this clause is removed, we are left with four rhythmic lines, which Ewald proposed to complete by adding:

But the head of Judah is Jerusalem,
And the head of Jerusalem is Jehovah.

This is at any rate the sense of the passage. Why should Judah be afraid of two cities whose kings were but the stumps of smoking firebrands, while her King was Jehovah of Hosts, and her capital was the "city of the great King" (Ps. 48 : 2)?

If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. It is a pity that the brevity and the assonance (cf. 5 : 7) of the Hebrew words are so difficult to reproduce. The general effect might be given thus: *No faith, no fixity.* This is one of the greatest words in the Bible. The secret of stability is trust in the invisible King. Ahaz has not this trust, therefore he inspects his water-supply with fear and trembling, bethinks him of a coalition with the Assyrians, and his heart shakes like the leaves on the forest trees; he is *disestablished.* Isaiah leans upon his God, sees him as the great Controller of history, and he is "quiet," strong, *established.* Faith is the secret of fixity, stability, firmness. He who really believes in the overruling Providence of God will always be established.

10, 11. **And Jehovah spake** should probably be *And I spake.* Isaiah sees the hesitation of Ahaz, his inability to rise to the faith to which he would lift him. Desperately in earnest, he offers him a sign **from Jehovah thy God** — a tender phrase fitted to wake dormant covenant memories in the mind of Ahaz. If the king cannot believe what he does not see, perhaps he will at least believe what he sees; and this faith, imperfect as it is, may help him to the other.

For **ask it in the depth, etc.**, we should probably read: *make it deep to Sheol or high to the height.* Isaiah is ready to offer Ahaz a sign from the underworld or the upperworld — practically = any sign he may demand. Considering the prophet's repudiation of necromancy (8 : 19), it is not likely that by a sign from Sheol he means the raising of a shade from the dead, as in 1 Sam. 28. In

12. depth or in the height above." But Ahaz said, "I will
13. not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD." And he said,
"Hear ye now, O house of David: is it a small thing for
you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also?
14. Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign;
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, Mat. 1:23

any case, this voluntary offer of Isaiah to give Ahaz a sign is a splendid illustration of the prophet's fearless faith. He knows that his God will not leave him in the lurch, but will interpose to help a weaker faith to confidence in himself. It has been cynically suggested that it was fortunate for Isaiah that his challenge was not accepted by Ahaz. It is clear, however, that Isaiah has no doubt in his own mind that the miracle he offers could be performed; but what is more to the point is that Ahaz too has no doubt. He is sure that, if he requested it, the miracle would be performed; that is why he refuses it. It would leave him practically without excuse, and that he does not want.

12. Ahaz declines the sign. His answer is the answer of a man with a bad conscience, though it carries with it a certain religious plausibility — **I will not tempt Jehovah**. There were familiar historical warnings against such a provocation of Jehovah (Exod. 17: 2, 7; cf. Deut. 6: 16). But the sign here was offered by one whom Ahaz felt instinctively to be a true prophet, and his refusal was only a refusal to be led into the light and liberty of faith. He stands before us as a worldling who excuses his obstinacy in the language of religious cant.

13. The indignation of Isaiah blazes forth. Ahaz had no faith, and did not wish to have any; could not see the invisible with his own eyes, and refused that which might have helped him to a faith in it. King and court — the **house of David** — were infected by the same spirit. Isaiah had often approached them before *as a man* with words of wise counsel, but here he is conscious of being commissioned by the most high God. It is God whom they are *wearying*, and not merely his human servant. At this moment God is in a very special sense behind his prophet; he calls him "*my* God" — Ahaz's God no more (vs. 10).

14. The indignant Isaiah now thrusts a sign upon the reluctant and incredulous Ahaz — a sign, too, which shall humble him, for it will show that some among his people are not so incredulous as he. It is the mighty **Lord**, not the gracious *Jehovah*, who gives the sign. An endless controversy has gathered round this sign, but two or three things are practically certain. (*a*) One, is that the word rendered **virgin** would be more adequately rendered, as

And shall call his name Immanuel.

15. Butter and honey shall he eat,
When he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and
choose the good,

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in SV mg., by *maiden;* the word implies a young woman of marriageable age, whether she is married or not. (*b*) Again, as in Gen. 16:11, the same Hebrew words and construction (*Behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son*) are used of Hagar who is *already* with child, so that the child alluded to in this verse may be already conceived; in any case, Syria and Israel are to be ravaged in war while the child to be born is still very little (vs. 16; cf. 8:4). It is clear, therefore, that he must belong to the immediate future, and there can be no allusion to the birth of the Messiah over seven centuries after this date. Duhm has trenchantly argued that the real significance of the sign lies not so much in the child as in his name. This name does not imply that the child would be God incarnate; it is, like so many other Hebrew names compounded with Jah or El, a *sentence*, which embodies a confession of faith; *With us* (*is*) *God.* The words are the same as those addressed by Samuel to Saul; *God* (*is*) *with thee* (1 Sam. 10:7), and recall the refrain of Ps. 46 (*Jehovah of Hosts is with us*). The point is that the defeat of Syria and Israel at the hands of Assyria is imminent, and mothers, inspired by that faith in God which the incredulous Ahaz lacks, will call their children *Immanuel* (With us is God). When disaster comes upon those two lands, and the name of Immanuel falls upon the ears of Ahaz, then he will be reminded of his meeting with Isaiah, he will be compelled to acknowledge the reasonableness of the prophet's demand for faith, and he will be shamed by the faith of his own subjects. The Hebrew "*the* maid" is practically equivalent to "*a* maid"; and, as Duhm remarks, since no particular woman is named, probably no particular woman is intended. Gressmann, however, has recently shown it to be possible that, after all, Isaiah is here adapting an ancient Semitic tradition or oracle of the birth of a wonderful boy who was to emancipate his people, and usher in an era of prosperity. Isaiah boldly claims that this ancient prophecy is to be fulfilled not in the remote, but in the immediate future.

15. **Butter**, *i.e.* soured milk, and wild **honey**, the poor fare of the nomad, are here probably intended to suggest the temporary desolation by war of Immanuel's land (Judah). The vs. is usually regarded as a gloss, made up of elements derived from vss. 16 and 22.

16. For before two or three years have passed, Syria and Israel,

The land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken.

Judah Will also be Ravaged (7:17–25)

17. The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people,
and upon thy father's house, days that have not come
from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah;
even the king of Assyria.
18. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.
19. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them
In the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks,
And upon all thorns, and upon all pastures.
20. In that day shall the LORD shave

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of which Ahaz stood in fear, would be ravaged in war and desolated. The prophecy was literally fulfilled; northern Israel was ravaged by the Assyrians in 734 B.C. Damascus was captured in 732 B.C., and the people of both districts deported (2 Kings 16:7–9; 15:29). **Good** and **evil** may have a moral meaning, but it may equally well refer to pleasant and unpleasant kinds of food (cf. 2 Sam. 19:35); the first meaning would imply an older child (cf. 8:4).

Vs. 17 links the last section with this one. There the message was that the coalition was in reality impotent, and would be destroyed. Here Isaiah foretells for Judah a fate similar to that which was to overtake Syria and Israel — desolation — at the hands of the very people whose favor Ahaz had courted (2 Kings 16:7 f.), and whose power he was ready to place above Jehovah's.

17. **Ephraim** (*i.e.* Israel) **departed from Judah**. This is the Judæan conception of the history. In point of fact, the rupture was as much due to Solomon's apostasy from the ideals and traditions of Israel as to anything else.

18–20. Jehovah will summon (cf. 5:26) foreign peoples — especially the Assyrians — to punish his own people in Judah, upon every corner of whose land they will settle like pestiferous *flies* and stinging *bees*. The king whom Ahaz had hired to help

With a razor that is hired, *which is* in the parts beyond
the River, *even* with the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the feet;
And it shall also consume the beard.
21. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep:
22. And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk
that they shall give he shall eat butter:
For butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in
the midst of the land.
23. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That every place where there were a thousand vines at
a thousand silverlings,
Shall even be for briers and thorns.
24. With arrows and with bow shall one come thither;
Because all the land shall be brier and thorns.
25. And all the hills that were digged with the mattock,
Thou shalt not come hither for fear of briers and thorns.
But it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the
treading of sheep."

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him (2 Kings 16:8) would, like a razor, **shave** the land bare — of crops and people.

21, 22. So thorough would this process of "shaving" be that nothing would be possible but the meagre life of a poor shepherd, whose fare was **butter** (*i.e.* soured milk) and wild **honey**. (The first half of vs. 22 is usually regarded as an intrusion.)

23–25. The vine-clad hills would also be reduced to a howling waste of **thorns** and thistles. So thick would be the jungle that wild beasts would have their home there, and hunters come with **bow** and **arrow**, and the once carefully tended vineyard slopes would be trampled upon by sheep and oxen. The ravaged **vines** are represented as having been very costly — a silver shekel each (about 60 cents: two shillings and six pence).

It has been happily suggested by Cheyne that this prophecy was delivered after Ahaz's appeal for assistance to the Assyrian king. Isaiah saw that, whatever its immediate effects might be,

The Fall of Damascus and Samaria (8 : 1–4)

8. And the LORD said unto me, "Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it [1] with the pen of a man, 'For
2. Maher-shalal-hash-baz'; and [2] I will take unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and
3. Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah." And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD unto me, "Call his name Maher-

[1] m. *in common characters.* [2] Gr. *take.*

the ultimate result of Assyrian intervention would assuredly be the desolation of Judah (1 : 7).

8 : 1–4. This prophecy must have been delivered about the same time as 7 : 3–16, clearly before Ahaz's appeal to Assyria, after which it required no prophetic eye to foresee the fall of Damascus and Samaria. The earnestness and variety of the prophecies of this period show how powerfully Isaiah's mind was excited by the strain of the situation, yet beneath it all he is calm and sure. He has seen his God, he understands his purpose, and he knows in advance the issue of the crisis.

1. As Isaiah had appealed to the king in vain (7 : 12), he now appeals, through his tablet with the strange inscription, to the people. The words were to be written **with the pen of a** common **man**, *i.e.* in letters intelligible to him. **Maher-shalal-hash-baz**, "crowded, clashing letters, full to the dullest ears of rumors of war: *Speed-spoil-Hurry-prey*" (G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. I, p. 120). The strange inscription, presumably hung in some conspicuous public place, would excite curiosity.

2. Read, with the Greek version, *And take unto me* reliable witnesses. In the nature of the case, these witnesses were probably no particular friends of Isaiah; least of all if **Uriah** is to be identified with **the priest** whom the idolatrous Ahaz later commissioned to build an altar in accordance with the pattern he had seen at Damascus (2 Kings 16 : 10 f.). Of **Zechariah**, who must have been a public man, we know nothing.

3. The mysterious name is conferred upon Isaiah's new-born child; the message it implies — which is not explained till vs. 4 — is incarnate in him (cf. note on 7 : 14). Isaiah's wife appears to be called **the prophetess** by courtesy.

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4. shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, 'My father,' and 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria."

The Invasion of Judah (8 : 5–8)

5. And the LORD spake unto me yet again, saying,
6. "Forasmuch as this people hath refused the waters of Shiloah
That go softly,
And rejoice in Rezin,
And Remaliah's son;

4. Before the child was two years of age (cf. 7 : 16), Damascus and Samaria, the capital cities of Syria and Israel, would be spoiled by Assyria. The *two* parts of the enigmatic name refer to the *two* kingdoms, whose spoil is hurried off to Assyria. Now the meaning is clear. The message of deliverance for Judah is essentially the same as Isaiah had already given to the king (7 : 16). As a matter of fact, Damascus fell in 732, and although Samaria did not fall till 721 B.C., the essence of the prophecy was fulfilled in the devastation wrought on northern Israel in 734 B.C. (2 Kings 15 : 29). . The precision with which Isaiah foretold the fate of these countries in the very near future is very remarkable. Throughout this crisis he must have been in remarkably intimate communion with his God (cf. vs. 11).

8 : 5–8. Here, as in 7 : 17 ff., is a prophecy of judgment following one of deliverance : Assyria will come like a flood and deluge the land. The rejection of *the waters of Shiloah* (vs. 6) appears to imply Ahaz's appeal to Assyria, and is therefore later than 8 : 1–4.

6. **This people** — Judah. A tunnel ran from Gihon (now the Virgin's Spring), on the east side of Jerusalem, to the reservoir at the southeast angle of the city; and the waters that ran, or rather *went softly*, leisurely, through this conduit from spring to pool (cf. 7 : 3) were **the waters of the Shiloah**. The people are as unbelieving as the king; they *rejected the waters of Shiloah*, or rather him of whose unobtrusive grace they were the emblem (Ps. 46 : 4); and they *melt, i.e. faint* as we should perhaps read, instead of the meaningless and [in Hebrew] ungrammatical **rejoice**, before Rezin and Pekah.

7. Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them
The waters of the River, strong and many,
Even the king of Assyria and all his glory:
And he shall come up over all his channels,
And go over all his banks:
8. And he shall sweep onward into Judah; he shall overthrow and pass through:
He shall reach even to the neck;
And the stretching out of [1] his wings shall fill
The breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

The Futility of Opposition to Judah (8:9, 10)

9. [2] Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and ye shall be broken in pieces;
And give ear, all ye of the far countries:
Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces;
Gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

[1] SV *its*. [2] Gr. *take knowledge*.

7 f. If they have rejected Jehovah, they will have Assyria; if they have rejected the gentle Shiloah, they will have the terrible Euphrates, which will overflow its banks and deluge Judah — symbol of the havoc to be wrought by Assyria, a havoc so complete that only Judah's head will be above water.

The stretching out of its (SV) **wings, etc.** This sentence is difficult. If the *wings* are the wings of the river, Assyria is now regarded as a bird of prey, and the metaphor is mixed. Possibly, however, the reference is to *his* (*i.e.*, *Jehovah's*) protecting wings — a thought which would modify the preceding idea of judgment; cf. 6:13c. Instead of "*thy* land, O Immanuel," we should perhaps translate "*the* land; *for* with us is God," taking the words, as in vs. 10, in their literal meaning. This concluding promise of protection (cf. 2:2–4; 4:2–6) would be in the spirit of the two following verses.

8:9 f. These verses can hardly have been spoken at the same time as the preceding threat of devastation. Formally addressed to the nations, they are really words of encouragement to Judah.

10. Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought:
Speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is
with us.

None is to be Feared but Jehovah (8:11–15)

11. For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand,
and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of
this people, saying,
12. "Say ye not, 'A [1] conspiracy.'
Concerning all whereof this people shall say, 'A
conspiracy':
Neither fear ye their fear,
Nor be in dread *thereof*.

[1] AV *confederacy*.

9, 10. The meaning is: rage and prepare yourselves for the fray as ye please, your plans will be frustrated, for *with us is God*.

The **counsel** and the **word** (vs. 10) may refer to the invasion of Judah (7:6), and the **peoples** are primarily Syria and Israel. Because these nations could not be properly called *distant*, it has been inferred that this passage, with its high hopes for Judah, is a later insertion. It may, however, quite well be a daring generalization, natural to Isaiah in the tense emotion of that crisis. Every nation opposed to Judah, he is confident, would prove to be as impotent as Syria and Israel: for *El*, the strong God, is with Judah.

8:11–15. How difficult it was to keep one's head clear and one's heart calm in the crisis created by the coalition of Syria and Israel against Judah is well illustrated by this section: only one steadied by Jehovah's mighty hand was equal to it.

11. Isaiah has the sense of being under powerful divine constraint, *mastered by Jehovah's hand* — another proof of the intense emotional experiences of the prophet during the crisis (cf. 7:13). Even he was tempted to **walk in the way of this people**, to be caught by the popular excitement, and depressed by the popular despondency; but the divine *hand* kept him straight and steady.

12, 13. The prophet must have a different outlook and a different vocabulary from the people. What they call **conspiracy** or *confederacy* (this word of AV gives the sense well), he and his

13. The LORD of hosts, him shall ye sanctify;
And let him be your fear, and let him be your dread."
14. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling
And for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel,
For a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15. And many shall stumble thereon,
And fall, and be broken,
And be snared, and be taken.

I Pet. 2:8
Rom. 9:32

Isaiah's Patient Hope (8:16–18)

16. Bind thou up the testimony, seal the [1] law among
17. my disciples. And I will wait for the LORD, that

[1] m. *teaching.*

disciples (plur.) are not to call confederacy. To any one who understands the purpose of Jehovah the coalition of Rezin and Pekah is nothing to be afraid of. But *count Jehovah of Hosts the conspirator* — it is *he* and not they that you ought to fear and dread. *He* is the Lord of history — not they. The difference between **sanctify** and *count* him *the conspirator*, is, in Hebrew, but the fraction of a consonant; and the latter word, with its echo of vs. 12, being the more daring and original, is the more natural in so impassioned a context.

14, 15. Omit the word **sanctuary**, which disturbs rhythm and context. The path of those who do not, like Isaiah, believe in Jehovah, and his control of history, would be beset by obstacles and dangers manifold — stones to trip them up, and snares to hold them fast. Their *way* (vs. 11) would be unhappy, unprosperous, deadly; at least, it would be so for **many**. Not, however, for all; not, for example, for Isaiah and his band. Here we get another glimpse of the doctrine of the remnant.

8:16–18. The people to whom Isaiah speaks are mostly unbelievers (vs. 12), dull of hearing and sight (6:9 f.); many, most, are stumbling (vs. 15). He will declare his message no more — at least for a season. Disappointed with the people, he will wait for his God. That is the general sense of 16 f., but the detail is difficult.

16. This verse looks like a command of Jehovah to Isaiah, though in that case the phrase **my disciples** is strange. But in vs. 17 the speaker is clearly Isaiah, and vs. 16 should perhaps be

hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look
Heb. 2:13 18. for him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts which dwelleth in mount Zion.

The Awful Plight of Unbelieving Judah (8:19–22)

19. And when they shall say unto you, "Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards,

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pointed to mean **I will bind up the testimony and seal the law, etc.** The **law** is Isaiah's *teaching* (cf. 1:10) throughout the present crisis (cf. 7:4); the **testimony** is the same thing considered as evidential. This he will write, bind up, seal like a legal document, and commit to his disciples, seeing that the people as a whole are obdurate, and turn a deaf ear to his message. The phrases, *bind, seal*, may however be metaphorical, and he may be merely resolving to set his message firmly in the heart of his disciples. Scholars have often quoted this passage as marking "the birth of the conception of the *Church*, the first step in the emancipation of spiritual religion from the forms of political life" (W. Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 275); the nation had rejected the message, a new community was formed in which it could be preserved and perpetuated. Unfortunately for this interpretation, however, the word *disciples* is not so firmly established in the text as one might wish. Judging by the Greek version, the original reading may have been, "bind the testimony, seal the instruction, *teach it not*" — in which case the picturesque figures of the disciples would disappear. On any view, however, the verse testifies to the deep sorrow of Isaiah at the popular lack of response to his message; and there can be little doubt that such a man as Isaiah had disciples.

17. But his sorrow is not without hope. The divine face is *hidden* from the people, they are too blind to see it (6:9 f.), but Isaiah has seen it (6:1), **and I will look for**, hope in, **him.**

18. If Isaiah could not preach, he did not need. He and his children were living sermons, incarnate pledges of the future. Their very names were eloquent and prophetic — *Isaiah* (Jehovah saves), *Shear-jashub* (7:3, a remnant will turn), and *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* (8:1–4) — prophetic of mercy as well as of judgment. He could not look on them without thinking of the future and of God — the God whose home was on **mount Zion** and whose glory he had seen there (6:1).

that chirp and that mutter": should not a people seek
unto their God? on behalf of the living *should they seek*
20. unto the dead? "To the law and to the testimony!"
if they speak not according to this word, surely there
is no morning for them.
21. And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and
hungry:
And it shall come to pass that, when they shall be
hungry, they shall fret themselves,
And curse [1] by their king and by their God,

[1] Or om. *by*.

8:19–22. The depths of despair to which the unbelievers will be reduced are strikingly portrayed in this passage. It is a very powerful picture of the effects of an Assyrian invasion.

19. The contrast between the popular *way* (vs. 11) and Isaiah's is vividly suggested here. The prophet can always consult the living *God:* the people, in their despair, turn like Saul (1 Sam. 28) to necromancy and witchcraft. On this view of the verse, the first half represents the people's speech, and the second the prophet's indignant reply. It is possible, however, to regard the whole verse as spoken by the people. In that case the last clause should be translated, **On behalf of the living should they** *not* **seek unto the dead**? and the *dead* would be the gods consulted (cf. the previous clause), exactly as in 1 Sam. 28:13 the shade of Samuel is called a god. For similar superstitious practices, cf. 2:6. We might translate *ghosts and familiar spirits that cheep and moan* (Cheyne). The Greek suggests, what is very probable, that the professors of the arts here alluded to were ventriloquists.

20. This verse is very obscure. The meaning may be that, realizing the impotence of those whom they have consulted, the desperate people will clamor for some such prophetic instruction as that which is now sealed up, because they have already rejected it (vs. 16); their cry will be **to the law and to the testimony** (cf. Amos 8:11). *Such assuredly will be the words uttered by those for whom there is no daybreak.* The thick night has fallen about them, unbroken by any light from heaven; they are wrapped in despair.

21, 22. The spiritual desolation is accompanied by physical distress. In their flight **through it**, *i.e.* the land, the desperate people are goaded by their hunger into indignation and blasphemy,

22. And turn their faces upward: and they shall look unto
the earth,
And behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish;
And into thick darkness *they shall be* driven away.

The Great Deliverance and the Glorious King (9:1–7)

9. But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish.
In the former time he brought into contempt the
land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the
latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of
the sea, beyond Jordan, [1] Galilee of the nations.

[1] m. *the district.*

cursing the king who cannot and the God who will not save them. In all directions they will look for help, up to the heaven, down to the earth, but everywhere will be distress and gloom.

9:1–7. The contrast between the joy of this section and the anguish of the last is very dramatic. The darkness in which it was wrapped is illuminated by a great light, the distress of invasion gives place to the joy of deliverance and victory; and the gladness of these latter days is crowned by the birth of a child, who, possessed with no less than marvellous gifts for government, is destined to sit upon the throne of David — a throne whose stability and perpetuity are now guaranteed.

1. The transition from the last section to this is mediated by this verse. This is especially obvious, if we accept the translation of RV — *But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish, etc.* AV seriously mistranslates the whole verse. As, however, the last section had dealt with an invasion of *Judah*, while the districts mentioned in this verse as first humbled and then lifted to honor belong to *Israel*, it has been not unnaturally suggested that this verse which, unlike the poem that follows, is written in prose, was added to connect the two sections, by one who referred the *darkness* of vs. 2 to the deportation of the inhabitants of the northern districts of Israel by the Assyrian king (2 Kings 15:29).

The sea is the sea of Galilee. **Beyond the Jordan**, *i.e.* east of it — Gilead. **Galilee**, rather *the circuit* **of the nations** — part o the district later known as Galilee. Both in Old and New Testa ment times its population appears to have been very heterogeneous

2. The people that walked in darkness
Have seen a great light:
They that dwelt in the land of the [1] shadow of death, Mat. 4:14-16
Upon them hath the light shined. Lk. 1:79
3. Thou hast multiplied the nation,
[2] Thou hast increased their joy;
They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4. For the yoke of his burden,
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
Thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.

[1] m. *deep darkness.* [2] A Hebrew variant is *thou didst not increase the joy.*

2. It was natural and almost inevitable that the **light** that arose upon the people of Galilee should be interpreted by Jewish-Christians as a prophecy of the appearance of Jesus in Galilee at the beginning of his ministry (Mat 4: 12–16).

3. There can be no doubt that RV — **Thou hast increased their joy** — is right, as against AV (*thou hast not increased the joy*). The Hebrew words for *not* and *to him* (Thou hast increased the joy *to him*, *i.e.* the nation) sound alike (viz., *lo*); and the parallelism excludes the possibility of the negative. This same law of parallelism, however, suggests the high probability of the following translation, which greatly improves the parallelism, and rests upon a very simple emendation — "Thou hast multiplied *the gladness* and increased the joy." The joy is described as the keenest known to Hebrew experience — harvest joy and battle joy, the joy of the reaper and that of the victor as he divides the spoil.

4. The joy is explained by the defeat of the enemy, *i.e.* the Assyrian. The **yoke** which *burdened* him (*i.e.* Israel, or rather Judah; see note on vs. 1) and the **staff** with which the **oppressor**, or rather *taskmaster*, beat his shoulder or back, are broken in pieces; it is as a deliverance from a second Egyptian bondage. The Assyrians are routed as completely as the *Midianites* were in that great **day**, *i.e.* battle-day, in the olden times, by Gideon (Jud. chaps. 6–8). The discomfiture of the enemy, and indeed all the incidents of this section, the rising of the light, the birth of the

5. For [1] all the armour of the armed man in the tumult,
And the garments rolled in blood,
Shall even be for burning,
For fuel of fire.

6. For unto us a child is born,
Unto us a son is given;
And the government shall be
Upon his shoulder:

[1] m. *every boot of the booted warrior.*

child, etc., belong to the future; but they are described in the perfect tense, because to the prophet they are divine certainties.

5. A splendid verse.

For every boot of the booted warrior that thundered along,
And garment rolled in blood,
Shall be doomed to the burning,
Fuel for the fire.

Every trace of war and its accoutrements — heavy warrior boots and bloody cloaks — must vanish.

6. Associated with this deliverance, and indeed the most blessed feature of the happy days to which the prophet looks forward, is the birth, the *gift* (as he also calls it), of a child, none other than the Messianic king. *On his shoulders rests the government,* the insignia of government — perhaps a royal robe is intended. The name by which he is to be called indicates how splendid is his equipment for the royal office. Particular emphasis is laid upon the two most essential qualities, — wisdom and power, — and his rule will guarantee the *peace* and welfare of his people. There can be little doubt that his name is fourfold, not (as in AV and RV) fivefold; the first two words, **Wonderful, Counsellor,** ought to be taken together, whether we interpret the Hebrew as a *wonder of a counsellor,* or *one whose counsel is wonderful* (practically *= wonderful counsellor*). And his strength is as divine as his wisdom. The phrase **Mighty God,** however, is somewhat misleading, suggesting as it does to English ears that the king is God incarnate. The same Hebrew words may indeed be used of God (cf. Jer. 32:18), but, in such a context as this, their flavor would be better represented by some such translation as *Warrior Divine,* or *Hero of Superhuman Might;* Deity is in him, but he is not Deity. Un-

And his name shall be called
[1] Wonderful, Counsellor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace.

7. [2] Of the increase of his government
And of peace there shall be no end,
Upon the throne of David
And upon his kingdom,
To establish it, and to uphold it
With judgement and with righteousness
From henceforth even for ever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this.

Lk. 1:32 f.

[1] m. *wonderful counsellor.* [2] Gr *great (shall be) his government.*

fortunately much doubt attaches to the meaning of the words rendered **Everlasting Father**. *Father of* duration, or *eternity*, has been explained as (i) one possessing the attribute of eternity, *i.e.* eternal; or (ii) fatherly (cf. Job 29:16) forever. Neither explanation is very satisfactory, and there is a strong temptation, especially in so military a context, to adopt the other possible translation, *Father of booty*, *i.e.*, the Messianic king is one who, as a warrior divine, vanquishes his foes, divides the booty, and secures peace for his people, becoming thus in very truth a **prince of peace**. But in so lofty a context, *everlasting father* appears, perhaps, to be the most appropriate meaning after all.

7. The perpetuity of a kingdom with such a king is guaranteed, especially as it is supported by those ethical qualities which alone exalt a nation; it is the **justice** and **righteousness** that ensure its continuance **from henceforth and even for ever**. Religiously speaking, the certainty of this whole brilliant future is guaranteed by the **zeal of Jehovah** — *jealousy* on its good side, that warm passion with which Jehovah defends and maintains his interests and his honor. With the omission of two Hebrew letters which appear to have been inadvertently repeated, the first clause of vs. 7 runs thus: "*Great is the* (*i.e.*, his) *government*, and without end the peace."

Though in this remarkable poem, the kingdom and the king are sketched in very rapid outlines, and the details are few, every stroke tells. In the future days war will be abolished, and its

The Doom of Israel (9:8–10:4)

8. The Lord sent [1] a word into Jacob,
And it hath lighted upon Israel.

[1] Gr. *death.*

cruel symbols will disappear (2:4); the great King will be gifted with superhuman wisdom, and with a strength which he will use in the interests of peace; and his throne rests securely upon a moral and religious foundation. His empire is established and upheld not by brute force, although the king is divinely strong, but by justice and righteousness, and it will be as eternal as they. Surely it is not unnatural to see in these great words an adumbration of the empire established by Christ.

9:8–10:4. Somewhat in the manner of Amos 4:6–12, Isaiah here, in a very powerful and artistically constructed poem, describes the various blows which are to fall on Israel — blows which, on the one hand, were intended as chastisement, but which, on the other, were designed to bring the people back to the God who had smitten them (vs. 13; cf. Amos 4:6, 8, 10). In spite of the tone of 10:1–4, and of the vagueness of the language in 9:8, it seems reasonably certain that this message was addressed not to Israel and Judah together, but to Israel only (cf. vs. 9). As Syria (Aram) is hostile to Israel (vs. 12), the passage must have been written before 735 B.C., when the two countries united in their assault upon Judah (7:1 ff.), and is therefore one of the earliest of Isaiah's prophecies. It is not easy to say whether the passage refers to the past, or the future — whether it is a description (as in Amos) of blows that have already fallen, to be followed by the more awful blow which will be dealt by the terrible Assyrian army (for it is all but universally agreed that 5:26–30 is the real climax of this passage), or whether it is a prediction. The latter seems the more probable. The past tenses prove nothing; for, as in 9:2–7, they may well be prophetic. The jaunty tone of vs. 10 seems to show that the catastrophes alluded to in vss. 12, 18, have not yet occurred. But some of them, *e.g.* the anarchy and civil war in vss. 18–20, are only too probable.

Israel will be assailed in War by her Neighbors (9:8–12)

8. The **word** is the oracle that follows, uttered by Isaiah. It is almost personified (cf. Ps. 107:20; 147:15); it has been **sent** and it shall **light** (lit. *fall*) with deadly effect upon **Israel**, *i.e.* not

9. And all the people shall know,
Even Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,
That say in pride
And in stoutness of heart,
10. "The bricks are fallen,
But we will build with hewn stone:
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will change them into cedars."
11. [1] Therefore the LORD shall set up on high against him
the adversaries of Rezin,
And shall stir up his enemies;
12. The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind;
And they shall devour Israel with open mouth.

[1] Gr. *God shall dash down those that rise up against mount Zion, and shall scatter his enemies.*

the whole people, but the northern kingdom, as the following verse with its express reference to *Ephraim* and the capital city *Samaria* seems to show.

9. They **shall know** it, by experience; the blow will be such as they shall feel. Grammar and metre alike suggest that a word has dropped out; perhaps:

(For they boast) in pride
And in stoutness of heart, saying.

10. The people here practically acknowledge that their situation is not all that might be desired. But they deal with it lightheartedly (cf. Hos. 6:2); ignorant of their real decrepitude (Hos. 7:9 f.), they face the future with boundless self-confidence and ambition. A palatial splendor will replace the simpler things that have been destroyed.

11, 12. Invasion will be the penalty of their ambitious and impenitent life. Instead of the **adversaries of Rezin**, parallelism suggests that we should simply read *his adversary*, regarding Rezin as a gloss. It is Syria (vs. 12), and therefore Rezin himself, its king (7:1), that is to be raised up. This was clearly written before Syria and Israel joined forces (7:1 ff.), and therefore before 735 B.C. An attack upon Israel or Judah by the Philistines was always a possibility (cf. for a somewhat later date, 2 Chron. 28:18; and earlier, Amos 1:6–8).

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

13. Yet the people hath not returned unto him that smote them,
Neither have they sought the LORD of hosts.
14. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail,
Palm-branch and rush, in one day.
15. The [1] ancient and the honourable man, he is the head;
And the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.
16. For they that lead this people cause them to err;
And they that are led of them are destroyed.
17. Therefore the Lord shall not rejoice over their young men,

[1] m. *elder.*

Here for the first time occurs the refrain which ends each strophe:

For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

It is a most solemn and impressive picture. Isaiah sees in imagination the first blow already fallen; but terrible as it is — an invasion before and behind — the divine Hand is still outstretched to smite again.

Israel will suffer some very Grievous Disaster (9:13–17)

13, 14. The object of the first blow was not merely punitive; it was to lead the people to repentance. But it failed. So another blow must fall, though what form it will take is not clear; in any case, leader and led will be destroyed — the aspiring **palm-branch** and the lowly **rush**, a figure for *high and low*. **In one day** — perhaps *battle-day* (cf. vs. 4).

15, 16. Vs. 15 has all the appearance of a gloss, intended to explain the figures of vs. 14; and vs. 16 seems to be an echo of 3:12.

17. The moral situation in Israel must be desperate indeed when the divine pity is refused even to the orphans and the wid

Neither shall he have compassion on their fatherless
and widows:
For every one is profane and an evil-doer,
And every mouth speaketh folly.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

18. For wickedness burneth as the fire;
It devoureth the briers and thorns;
Yea, it kindleth in the thickets of the forest,
And they roll upward in thick clouds of smoke.
19. Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land
burnt up:
The people also are as the fuel of fire.
No man spareth his brother;

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ows, who can otherwise count upon it so surely (1:17). The reason is that **every one** sets religion and morality at defiance, and **every** mouth talks blasphemous folly (cf. Ps. 14:1). Instead of "the Lord **will not rejoice over**," the change of a letter will give us "the Lord *will not pass over*," *i.e.*, *spare*, which suits the parallelism much better. The Hand is still outstretched to deal a further blow.

Israel will be torn by Anarchy and Civil War (9:18–21)

18. The wickedness of Israel is graphically compared to a **fire** which starts among the thorns and thistles of the field and then spreads to the forest, rolling up in columns of smoke. This figure finely suggests the havoc and lurid horrors wrought by anarchy and civil war, which vss. 19, 20 show the prophet has in mind, — if not as an expression of the "wickedness," at any rate as the immediate consequence of it.

19, 20. The meaning of the word rendered in RV **burnt up**, and in AV *darkened*, is quite uncertain. Some suggest *is confused*, *reels*, etc. Instead of **are as the fuel of fire**, Hackmann, by a very simple and plausible emendation, reads *are as eaters of men*, i.e. *like cannibals*, which would be a vivid, and not overdrawn (cf. Hos. 7:7), statement of the effects of civil war. The insatiable ferocity of the strife is suggested with equal vigor by

20. And one shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry;
And he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied:
They shall eat every man the flesh of his [1] own arm;
21. Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh:
And they together shall be against Judah.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

10. Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees,
And to the writers that write perverseness:
2. To turn aside the needy from judgement,
And to take away the right of the poor of my people,
That widows may be their spoil,
And that they may make the fatherless their prey!

[1] Tar. *neighbor.*

the similar figures of vs. 20. Instead of "the flesh of **his own arm**," we should no doubt read, by the omission of a single letter, "the flesh of *his neighbor*." Much can be said for the suggestion that the last clause of vs. 19 should immediately precede the last clause of vs. 20, thus:

No man shall spare his brother,
Each shall eat the flesh of his neighbor.

21. Intertribal feuds will break out, only in turn to be swallowed up by the common hatred of Judah. Isaiah's picture of anarchy finds its historical counterpart in the confusions reflected in 2 Kings 15 and *passim* in Hosea. Yet, fearful as this anarchy is, the divine Hand is stretched out still to deal another blow.

Israel will be swept by a Storm from afar (10:1–4)

10:1,2. The detail in vss. 1, 2 — so like Isaiah's complaints elsewhere of Judah (cf. 1:17, 23) and so unlike the vaguer language of the preceding strophes — coupled with the introductory *Woe*, which irresistibly recalls the group of Woes in Chap. 5:8 ff., pronounced upon Judah, have led some scholars to the conclusion that this section deals with Judah, not with Israel. This conclu-

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation,
And in the desolation which shall come from far?
To whom will ye flee for help!
And where will ye leave your glory?
4. They shall only bow down under the prisoners,
And shall fall under the slain.
For all this his anger is not turned away,
But his hand is stretched out still.

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sion, though by no means impossible, is unnecessary. The pages of Amos and Hosea show us that the thing here denounced was as common in Israel as in Judah. The Hebrew suggests the zeal with which the writing was done. The elaborate legal formalities really violated the plain man's sense of justice, and indeed had the effect — which, according to vs. 2, was intentional — of injustice (cf. Amos 5 : 12).

3. With startling abruptness the prophet puts his question to the champions of injustice: But **what will ye do**, etc.? For them there is coming "a day of revision, when they must answer to the Supreme Judge" (Skinner). The figure changes; the visitation will take the form of a *storm* (rather than **desolation**) which shall come from afar. This dark allusion, worked out with terrible frankness in the concluding strophe (5 : 26–30), is of course to the Assyrians, who in 5 : 26 are described as "a nation from afar."

To whom will ye flee? The Hebrew here is subtle, combining the ideas *To whom will ye flee?* and *on whom can ye lean?* **Glory** = wealth, resources.

4. This verse, in its present form, defies translation. It could not without violence be rendered: (*They can do nothing*) *but crouch among the prisoners, and fall beneath the slain, i.e.* their doom would be either imprisonment or death upon the battlefield. A very ingenious rearrangement of the consonantal text, suggested by Lagarde, yields the meaning: *Beltis has sunk down, Osiris is broken, and under the slain they fall.* Osiris is an Egyptian Deity, and Beltis, the Lady, would in this connection be Isis. It is certain from Hosea (cf. 7 : 11; 12 : 1) that a party in Israel aimed at an Egyptian alliance; and Isaiah would in that case be here foretelling the futility of Egyptian help, the impotence of Egyptian gods (cf. 46 : 1). This very daring textual suggestion cannot be regarded as improbable, considering, on the one hand, Israel's leanings to Egypt, and, on the other, the tendency of later Jewish editors to obliterate the unworthier aspects of Israel's early

The Doom of the Assyrian (10:5–34)

The Two Plans — Assyria's and Jehovah's (10:5–15)

5. Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger,
   The staff in whose hand is mine indignation!
6. I will send him against a profane nation,
   And against the people of my wrath will I give him
   a charge,

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religion; or it may be that to them the names were really obscure. The suggestion is, at any rate, superior to our present text.

The divine Hand is stretched out still, this time to deal the last and deadliest blow of all — for it is now generally admitted that the magnificent description of the onward march of the Assyrian army in 5:26–30 is the real and original climax of this noble poem. After it has come, the Hand needs to be stretched out no more. Roaring like lions, the Assyrians will carry off their helpless prey, and nothing will be left but a desolation.

This poem (9:8–10:4) shows that Isaiah was no less great as a poet than as a prophet. There is a singularly weird impressiveness about the outstretched Hand, dealing in each successive strophe a new and terrible blow, bringing upon unhappy Israel invasion, war, anarchy, despair, and only withdrawn when the tireless and invincible Assyrians come to tear Israel in pieces.

10:5–34. A very profound conception of history marks this group of oracles. History is but the gradual outworking of Jehovah's purpose, and to this purpose the Assyrians are all unconsciously made to contribute. The passage implies the fall of Samaria (vss. 9, 11: 721 B.C.) and Carchemish (vs. 9: 717 B.C.) and must therefore be later than 717 B.C.; on the other hand, it must be earlier than 701 B.C., when Sennacherib was compelled to abandon his projected assault upon Jerusalem. Sometime between those two dates it falls — probably nearer, but not immediately before 701 B.C., as the Assyrian advance did not come (as pictured in vss. 28–32) from the north.

10:5–15. Jehovah has his plan and the Assyrians have theirs; but he, the true Lord of history, uses them as his instruments to work out his own plan, while all the time they imagine that they are working out theirs.

5, 6. The verse should run — *Woe, Assyrian! the rod of mine anger, and the staff of mine indignation.* The Assyrians are the rod which Jehovah uses to smite the *godless nations* — Judah in par-

To take the spoil, and to take the prey,
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets
7. Howbeit he meaneth not so,
Neither doth his heart think so;
But it is in his heart to destroy,
And to cut off nations not a few.
8. For he saith,
"Are not my princes all of them kings?
9. Is not Calno as Carchemish?
Is not Hamath as Arpad?
Is not Samaria as Damascus?
10. As my hand hath [1] found the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;
11. Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols,
So do to Jerusalem and her idols?"
12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord

[1] m. *reached.*

ticular is meant — with which he is *angry;* and they execute their commission with terrible thoroughness.

7. *He* — the Assyrian — does not realize that he is but a tool in Jehovah's hands; *his* purpose is simply destruction on a gigantic scale. His arrogance and passion for destruction are illustrated in the following speech — vss. 8–11.

8–11. How could Jerusalem withstand a monarch who had kings for officials and who had already subdued cities much stronger than herself — Calno in 738 B.C., *Carchemish* (a famous city on the Euphrates) in 717, *Hamath* on the Orontes in 720, *Arpad* (a little north of Aleppo) in 740, *Samaria* (the capital of northern Israel) in 721, and *Damascus* in 732? *Jerusalem and her idols* — a natural phrase on Assyrian lips — can hope to fare no better than *Samaria and her good-for-nothing gods:* the defeat of a people was held to prove the impotence of its god. In vs. 10, the conquered kingdoms generally are described as *the kingdoms of the good-for-nothing gods.*

12. This vs. interrupts the proud speech of the Assyrian king with a threat of divine punishment. (Read "*He* will punish.")

hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on
Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of
the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.
13. For he hath said,
"By the strength of my hand I have done it,
And by my wisdom; for I am prudent:
And I have removed the bounds of the peoples,
And have robbed their treasuries,
And [1] I have brought down as a valiant man
Them that sit *on thrones:*
14. And my hand hath found as a nest
The riches of the peoples;
And as one gathereth eggs that are forsaken,
Have I gathered all the earth;
And there was none that moved the wing,
Or that opened the mouth, or chirped."
15. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth
therewith?
Shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh
it?

[1] Gr. *I will shake cities with their inhabitants.*

13. The Assyrian attributes his success to his own *might* and the *astuteness* of his own policy in removing national boundaries (for example, by transferring the inhabitants of one country to another); he does not know that he is but a tool in *Jehovah's* hand (vss. 5–7). **As a valiant man** — or perhaps *like a bull* (a figure of frequent occurrence in Assyrian art) — he brings down to the dust the peoples of the world, or it may be their kings.

14. The irresistible might claimed by the Assyrian in vs. 13 is graphically described in vs. 14, which compares his depredations to the harrying of birds' nests; as the eggs are carried ruthlessly away, and the helpless birds dare not even chirp, so the nations are impotent when their treasures are swept away by the Assyrians.

15. **Shall the axe boast, etc.?** This is the prophet's answer to Assyria's proud boast. Assyria was but an axe, a saw, a rod, wielded

As if a rod should shake them that lift it up,
Or as if a staff should lift up *him that is* not wood.

The Fate of Assyria and Judah (10:16–23)

16. Therefore shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Send among his fat ones leanness;
And under his glory there shall be kindled
A burning like the burning of fire.
17. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame;
And it shall burn and devour his thorns
And his briers in one day.
18. And he shall consume the glory of his forest,
And of his fruitful field, both soul and body:
And it shall be [1]as when a standard bearer fainteth.
19. And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few,
That a child may write them.
20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the

[1] m. *as when a sick man pineth away.*

by the mighty arm of Jehovah, with no more right to brag over him than those instruments have over the man who wields them. **Not wood**, *i.e.*, man — greater than, and master of, the wood.

10:16–23. After the boastful speech of the Assyrian (cf. esp. vss. 13, 14) the announcement of his downfall comes with singular effect.

16–19. The destruction is described first as **leanness**, or *wasting away*, and then as a *conflagration*, though only the latter figure is elaborated; the **fire** is kindled by the **holy** Jehovah, the **Light of Israel** — or rather he *is* the flame that will speedily consume them. The picture is that of a forest fire (cf. 9:18), in which but few trees survive; in vs. 18 the destruction is represented as absolute — **body and soul**. *And it shall be as when a sick man pineth away* (RV m.) — a reversion to the figure of vs. 16. The change and confusion of metaphors is very unlike Isaiah's, and may point to interference by a later hand.

20–23. For **Israel** (*i.e.* Judah) no less than for Assyria, *destruc-*

remnant of Israel, and they that are escaped out of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD,
21. the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty
Rom. 9:27 f. 22. God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *only* a remnant of them shall return: a consumption is determined, overflowing with right-
23. eousness. For a consummation, and that determined, shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth.

The Consolation of Zion: Assyria will assuredly Fall (10:24–34)

24. Therefore thus saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, "O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.
25. For yet a little while, and the indignation shall be accomplished, and mine anger, in their destruction.
26. And the LORD of hosts shall stir up against him a

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tion is strictly decreed, bringing in justice like a flood (vs. 22: Cheyne); but a **remnant** will survive, and, taught by the divine judgment upon Assyria, will *lean no more* (vs. 20), as Ahaz had done (2 Kings 16:7 ff.) upon that power which later, in the reign of Hezekiah, **smote** Judah, but will turn to their own **mighty God** (*el gibbor* — the name given in 9:6 to the Messianic king) and lean upon him in **truth**, *i.e.* sincerity. **A remnant shall return**: this is intended to recall the name of Isaiah's son — *Shear-jashub* (7:3), who was a sort of incarnate prophecy.

24–27. In view of the hope just expressed (vss. 20–23) the people of Jerusalem, in which is the sacred temple hill of **Zion**, are urged *not to be afraid of the Assyrians*, though they smite as the *Egyptians* did in the ancient days of the oppression; for Jehovah in his anger is determined speedily to destroy them as completely as the Midianites (cf. 9:4) were destroyed by Gideon (cf. Jud. 7:25).

scourge, as in the slaughter of Midian at the rock of
Oreb: and his rod shall be over the sea, and he shall
lift it up after the manner of Egypt.
27. And it shall come to pass in that day, that
His burden shall depart from off thy shoulders,
And his yoke from off thy neck,
And the yoke shall be destroyed
Because of the anointing.

28. He is come to Aiath,
He is passed through Migron;
At Michmash he layeth up his baggage:
29. They are gone over the pass;
[1] They have taken up their lodging at Geba:
Ramah trembleth;
Gibeah of Saul is fled.
30. Cry aloud with thy voice, O daughter of Gullim!
Hearken, O Laishah!
[2] O thou poor Anathoth!
31. Madmenah is a fugitive:
The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

[1] m. *Geba is our lodging (they cry).* [2] m. *Answer her, O Anathoth.*

or the Egyptians at the Red Sea. Jehovah is about to **stir up against him** — the Assyrian — a **scourge**, in other words, *brandish the whip* or the **rod** of destruction; and the result will be that the **burden** will fall from the shoulder and the **yoke** from the neck of Judah (cf. 9:4).

27b–32. This passage describes an imaginary march of the Assyrian army upon Jerusalem from the north. Its opening words — the last clause of vs. 27, which can hardly be correct as it stands (**because of the anointing**) — may originally have run: *A destroyer goeth up from the north* (Robertson Smith) or *from Rimmon* (cf. Jud. 20:45) east of Bethel (so Duhm). *Aiath* is Ai, nine miles from Jerusalem, so that the enemy is very near. The places named he passes on his way, and they are filled with con-

32. This very day shall he halt at Nob:
He shaketh his hand at the mount of the [1] daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.

33. Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
Shall lop the boughs with terror:
And the high ones of stature shall be hewn down,
And the lofty shall be brought low.
34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,
And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

[1] Heb. by a slip, *house*.

sternation. The passage is full of word-play (cf. Mic. 1:10–15) impossible to reproduce; thus, *Yell, Gallim: listen, Laishah: answer, Anathoth.* Anathoth, about three miles from Jerusalem, was Jeremiah's birthplace. A halt is called at *Nob* immediately to the north of Jerusalem, whose doom now seems to be sealed, as the Assyrian *fist is shaken* in her face.

33, 34. But — "a quiet pause of breathless anxiety" (Orelli), and — **behold**! The climax is as surprising as it is wonderful. The foe, mighty and haughty though they be, so far from smiting Jerusalem, are themselves mysteriously smitten by Jerusalem's *mightier* God. The Assyrian army is compared to a great forest like **Lebanon**, and crash go the giant cedars, felled by the irresistible arm of Jehovah.

The chapter forms an impressive picture of the clash between Assyria and Judah, representatives to Isaiah, respectively, of the secular and the divine idea. Assyria is Jehovah's tool for the chastisement of Judah, but Assyria's arrogance must also be chastised; and she receives her most signal chastisement in the hour of her loftiest arrogance and before the walls of the very city she was bent on humiliating. With such a prospect, the people of Jerusalem might well *fear not* (vs. 24): a great purpose of Jehovah was involved in her preservation (cf. 14:24–27).

Chaps. 11 and 12. In the closing verses of Chap. 10 the fall of Israel's great antagonist was portrayed, and the ground is now clear for the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. To that this chapter is devoted — vss. 1–9 describing the King himself, his

The Bliss of Israel in the Latter Days (Chaps. 11, 12)

The Messianic King and Kingdom (11 : 1–9)

11. And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse,
And a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit:
2. And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;
3. And his [1] delight shall be in the fear of the LORD:
And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,
Neither [2] reprove after the hearing of his ears:

[1] Heb. *scent.* [2] m. SV *decide.*

character, and the effects of his rule, vss. 10–16 the triumphant return to Palestine of Hebrew exiles from the four corners of the earth.

1. The Messianic king will be of the same family as David — so to speak, a second David. That family is now like the **stock** or stump of a tree — a phrase which suggests, perhaps, that the days of the monarchy are over.

2. The king will be specially equipped for his high office by **the spirit of Jehovah**, which will not simply, as in the olden times (Jud. 14 : 6), inspire him intermittently, but **rest upon him** permanently; and its quality will be seen in the three different spheres of intellect, of practical life, and of religion. It will equip him with a general *wisdom* and *insight* into the meaning and conditions of his office, with a *penetration* which will enable him to discover ways and means to secure his ends, and a *strength* to carry them out, and finally with a real *appreciation* of and *reverent regard* for the will of Jehovah whose servant he is.

3. The first clause of vs. 3 is somewhat obscure, but it at least implies that the king's work is done in the spirit and atmosphere of religion. One great function of the ancient ruler was the administration of justice; here the Messianic king, endowed as he is by the spirit, will be a master, with an unerring judgment that no specious appearances or plausible statements can deflect.

4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,
And [1] reprove with equity for the meek of the earth:
And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth,
2 Thes. 2:8 And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
Eph. 6:14 And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6. And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling [2] together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7. And the cow and the bear shall feed;
Their young ones shall lie down together:
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,

[1] SV *decide.* [2] Gr. adds *shall graze.*

4. For **reprove**, read *decide.* As the champion of justice, his business will be, on the one hand, to help the downtrodden to their rights, and, on the other, to put an end to violence. His mere word will bring death to godless and violent men, as Peter's word brought death to the lying Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:5, 10). For "smite **the earth**" read "smite *the violent man.*"

5. The **girdle** graphically suggests the king's activity; he will be ready to work and fight, and the cause to which he gives himself is **righteousness** and **faithfulness** — the strenuous and conscientious pursuit of justice. On this his throne was founded and by this its stability was guaranteed (cf. 9:7).

6–8. In its present setting, this beautiful picture of peace in the animal world is to be regarded not only as an accompaniment of, but perhaps, in a measure, as the result of the transformation of human character effected by the righteous rule of the Messiah. Among the animals, special enemies will become special friends, the wild and the tame will be found grazing peacefully together.

In 6b, perhaps we should read "the calf and the young lion *shall feed* together," and in 7a, "the cow and the bear *shall be friends.*"

And the weaned child shall put his hand
On the basilisk's den.
9. They shall not hurt nor destroy
On all my holy mountain:
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.

The Triumphant Return (11:10–16)

10. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the root of Jesse which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, Rom. 15:12 Rev. 22:16
Unto him shall the nations seek;
And his resting place shall be glorious.
11. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the Lord shall [2] set his hand again the second time,

[1] Gr. *show.*

8. The presence of the *little child* (vs. 6) among the wild animals shows how tame they have become — a point enhanced in vs. 8, where a baby can fearlessly play with a venomous viper, sportively reaching out with his finger for its *eye* (though perhaps we should read *den*).

9. In all Palestine, the **mountain** land, blessed as it now is with a perfect knowledge of Jehovah (for **earth** read *land*), men will do no harmful or destructive work; peace and virtue will reign. The vs. is either the original of or a reminiscence of 65:25 and Hab. 2:14.

11:10–16. In that glorious day of the poet's dream, the Hebrews that have been scattered about the earth will return to the home-land, over which now reigns the Messianic king.

10. This vs. hangs midway between the last section and this, pointing back to the Messiah (a *branch*, rather than a **root** of Jesse), and forward to the larger world beyond Messiah's land. He is as an **ensign**, a *standard*, to which the nations resort; to him they go, as in 2:2–4, for instruction; and Jerusalem, his **resting place** or residence, shall be glorious (cf. 4:2–6).

11, 12. As once before the Lord had brought Israel out of exile

To recover the remnant of his people
Which shall remain, from Assyria and from Egypt,
And from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam,
and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from
the islands of the sea.

12. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations,
And shall assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together the dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.

13. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart,
And they that vex Judah shall be cut off:
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

14. And they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the
Philistines on the west;
Together shall they spoil the children of the east:
They shall put forth their hand upon Edom and
Moab;
And the children of Ammon shall obey them.

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in Babylon, so he would again lift up his hand to redeem those of his people who were dispersed throughout the world, notably in **Assyria** (possibly here = Syria) and Egypt. The remaining names represent parts of these two empires (*a*) *Pathros* (Southern Egypt), *Cush* (Ethiopia); and (*b*), *Elam* (Susiana), *Shinar* (Babylonia), *Hamath* (on the Orontes), and the *islands and coasts of the* Mediterranean *Sea*. A *signal* would be divinely given to the nations to bring back the exiles, both men and women (*dispersed* is fem.), to their own land.

13. All those who are jealous of Ephraim (*i.e.* Israel) and hostile to Judah will be destroyed, nor between these two shall there be any such jealousy or hostility as animated them in post-exilic times (cf. John 4:9); they shall be at peace with the world and with one another.

14. Their return shall be signalized by a triumph over all their enemies — Philistines on the west, Arabs on the **east**, etc. They shall *swoop down* on the **shoulder of the Philistines**, *i.e.* their mountains that slope towards the sea.

15. And the LORD shall [1] utterly destroy the tongue of the
Egyptian sea;
And with his [2] scorching wind shall he shake his
hand over the River,
And shall smite it into seven streams,
And cause men to march over dry-shod.
16. And there shall be an high way for the remnant of his
people,
Which shall remain, from Assyria;
Like as there was for Israel
In the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

The Song of Thanksgiving (Chap. 12)

12. And in that day thou shalt say,
"I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD;

[1] Gr. Tar. *dry up.* [2] Gr. Vg. Syr. *violent.*

15, 16. To facilitate their return (15 f. precedes 13 f. in thought) the wonders of the Exodus will be repeated: *Jehovah will* **destroy** (or rather, with the Greek version, *dry up*) as he then did (Ex. 14:21; 15:8) *by the might* (or the *glow*) *of his breath, i.e.* by a mighty wind, **the tongue of the Egyptian** (*i.e.* the *Red*) **Sea**; and the great **river** Euphrates he will **smite into seven streams** so shallow that the people could cross them **dryshod**, *i.e. in sandals*, and a miraculous way would be made for the people across the eastern desert (cf. 40:3).

The great extent of the dispersion implied by this passage (vs. 11) hardly fits the circumstances of Isaiah's time, when at most the people of the northern kingdom had been taken to Assyria (2 Kings 15:29; 17:6). This picture of the restoration comes no doubt from a much later time, when Israel was, almost literally, to be found "in the four corners of the earth" (vs. 12). How precious in those days was the memory of ancient deliverances is shown by vss. 15 f., and the political ambitions that marred the purity of their religious hopes are seen in the desire for the subjugation of the sister peoples. On the whole the passage does not stand upon so high a level as that to which it is appended (11:1–9), with its fine description of Messiah's righteous and

For though thou wast angry with me,
Thine anger is turned away,
And thou comfortedst me.
2. Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust, and will not be afraid:
For [1] the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and song;
And he is become my salvation."
3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water
Out of the wells of salvation.
4. And in that day shall ye say,
"Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name,
Declare his doings among the peoples,
Make mention that his name is exalted.

[1] Heb. *Jah Jehovah.*

happy reign, in which even the beasts were at peace with men and with one another.

Chap. 12. With such an outlook as that opened up by Chap. 11 — the Messianic kingdom and the restoration of the exiles to the home land — well might Israel lift up her song of praise. The affinities of this song with the song of Moses (Exod. 15) are not unnatural, considering the allusion in the preceding verses (cf. 11:15).

2. Read, *Behold the God of my salvation. I will fearlessly trust; for Jah* (*i.e.* Jehovah) *is my strength*, etc. Cf. Ex. 15:2. In this passage, *I* is not Isaiah, but the later Jewish *church*.

3–6. These vss. in the second person plural are perhaps another poem (cf. vs. 4 with vs. 1).

The salvation which stirred Israel to such exuberant joy and gratitude was larger than the recent deliverance; it was like an inexhaustible well, or fountain from which she could draw continually; and the story of this divine deliverance deserves to be told to all the world.

This song of thanksgiving forms a very appropriate conclusion not only to the last chapter, but to the whole of the first great division of the book of Isaiah (Chaps. 1 to 12). Its manner, however, is quite unlike Isaiah's, and it was probably added by a later hand to complete and conclude the group, Chaps. 1–12. The redemption and gratitude of Israel make an admirable foil to

5. Sing unto the LORD ; for he hath done excellent things :
   Let this be known in all the earth.
6. Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion :
   For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee."

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the picture of her sin and ingratitude with which the section opens (Chap. 1).

PROPHECIES CONCERNING FOREIGN NATIONS
(Chaps. 13–23)

13:1 PROPHECY CONCERNING BABYLON (13 : 1–14 : 23)

The Doom of Babylon (Chap. 13)

13. The[1] burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

2. Set ye up an ensign upon the bare mountain,
Lift up the voice unto them,

[1] m. *oracle concerning.*

Chaps. 13–23. With the exception of 17 : 3–11, which deals with Israel, and Chap. 22 with Jerusalem, all the prophecies of this group are concerned with foreign peoples.

13 : 1–14 : 23. This magnificent poem has for its theme the destruction of Babylon (13 : 19) and her king (14 : 4). It glows from end to end with passionate hatred of the oppressor, and looks forward with grim satisfaction to the day of doom to be ushered in by Cyrus and his Medes (13 : 17) and Persians.

1. **Burden**, or rather *oracle* — literally, *lifting up* (of the prophet's voice) — **on Babylon**. The Babylon here denounced is the great empire that conquered and succeeded the Assyrian empire of Isaiah's age. As the doom is imminent, the date must fall shortly before the capture of Babylon in 538 B.C. by Cyrus, and no doubt after he had put himself at the head of the Median empire (13 : 17). The passage would then come, like Chaps. 40–55, from the Babylonian exile, and could not belong to Isaiah. The headings of oracles were often added by later hands.

The Gathering of the Enemy for the Attack on Babylon (vss. 2–4)

Upon a **bare mountain**, the *signal* for the summons will be more clearly seen. *They, i.e.* the Medians (vs. 17), are loudly summoned to enter the **gates** of the princely Babylonians, *i.e.* Baby-

Wave the hand that they may go
Into the gates of the nobles.
3. I have commanded
My consecrated ones,
Yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger,
Even my proudly exulting ones.
4. The noise of a multitude in the mountains,
Like as of a great people!
The noise of a tumult of the kingdoms
Of the nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts mustereth
The host for the battle.

5. They come from a far country,
From the uttermost part of heaven,
Even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation,
To destroy the whole land.
6. Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand;
As destruction from the Almighty shall it come.
7. Therefore shall all hands
Be feeble,
And every heart of man shall melt:
8. And they shall be dismayed;
Pangs and sorrows shall take hold *of them;*
They shall be in pain as a woman in travail:

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lon itself. These **proudly exulting** foreign warriors are actually regarded as **consecrated** (among the Semites war is a sacred thing, cf. 1 Sam. 13:9) to the service of *Jehovah*, to execute his anger upon Babylon. And *hark!* the sound of the gathering hosts, as they are mustered by Jehovah himself.

Their Coming shall strike Terror into Babylon (vss. 5–8)

Jehovah comes at the head of the army, whose warriors are **the weapons of his indignation**. Well may the Babylonians **howl**

They shall be amazed one at another;
Their faces shall be faces of flame.

9. Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel,
With wrath and fierce anger;
To make the land a desolation,
And to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.
10. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof
Shall not give their light:
The sun shall be darkened in his going forth,
And the moon shall not cause her light to shine.
Mat. 24:29
Mk. 13:24
11. And I will punish the world for *their* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
And I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.
12. I will make a man more rare than fine gold,
Even a man than the pure gold of Ophir.

13. Therefore [1] I will make the heavens to tremble,
And the earth shall be shaken out of her place,

[1] Gr. *the heavens shall tremble.*

(with vs. 6 cf. Joel 1:15), and their faces be **faces of flame**, *i.e.* flushed with excitement, as they see the oncoming *day of Jehovah*, *i.e.* of Jehovah's triumph over them.

The Desolation Wrought (vss. 9–12)

The judgment, in which Babylon will fall, is a **world**-judgment (vs. 11; cf. vs. 9, *the earth*, rather than **the land**) which will annihilate the guilty, especially the **proud** and violent (vs. 11). Nature, too, will be involved, the **sun**, **moon**, and **constellations** (lit. *Orions*, cf. Job 9:9; 38:31) becoming dark; and the survivors of the judgment would be so few that they would be as **rare** as **fine gold**.

The Horrors of the Judgment (vss. 13-16)

There is panic alike in nature and among men. The merchants, of whom Babylon is full, will **flee** in terror, like wandering or

In the wrath of the LORD of hosts,
And in the day of his fierce anger.
14. And it shall come to pass, that as the chased [1] roe,
And as sheep that no man gathereth,
They shall turn every man to his own people,
And shall flee every man to his own land.
15. Every one that is found shall be thrust through;
And every one that is taken shall fall by the sword.
16. Their infants also shall be dashed in pieces
Before their eyes;
Their houses shall be spoiled,
And their wives ravished.

17. Behold, I will stir up the Medes
Against them,
Which shall not regard silver,
And as for gold, they shall not delight in it.
18. And *their* bows shall dash
The young men in pieces;
And they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb;
Their eye shall not spare children.

[1] m. *gazelle.*

hunted animals (roes or gazelles) each to his own land; and the Babylonians — every one that is taken or *caught* — shall die a bloody death. In point of fact, the conquerors did not behave according to the hopes expressed in vss. 15 f.

The Medes are to be the Destroyers (vss. 17–19)

17. Not till now are we told by what historical power the destruction is to be effected. Cyrus was in reality a Persian; but after overthrowing the Median dynasty in 549 B.C., he united the Medes and Persians under his sway, and some of his generals appear to have been Medes. No bribes of silver or gold will divert them from their vengeance.

18. The first clause makes little sense, and the metre is defective.

19. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
Shall be as when God overthrew
Sodom and Gomorrah.

20. It shall never be inhabited,
Neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation:
Neither shall the Arabian pitch there;
Neither shall shepherds make their flocks to lie down there.

21. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there;
Rev. 18:2 And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures;
And ostriches shall dwell there,
And [1] satyrs shall dance there.

[1] m. *he-goats.*

It has been suggested that the original may have run somewhat as follows (cf. Jer. 50:42):

Bow and spear they hold,
Cruel are they,
All the young men they smite
And the maidens in pieces are dashed. (So Marti.)

19. At the hands of the Medes, the fate of the glorious Babylon would be as terrible as that of Sodom (Gen. 19). The Chaldeans, near the north end of the Persian Gulf, became in the seventh century B.C. masters of Babylonia, so that Chaldean is practically equivalent to Babylonian.

Babylon a Wild Desolation (vss. 20–22)

The destruction of the city would be so thorough that its site would be for ever the gloomy haunt of wild beasts — incarnations, as it were, of evil spirits (cf. Rev. 18:2).

No trading *Arabian*, or Bedouin, with his caravan, would pitch his tent there. No **shepherds** with their **flocks** would be there, but *wild cats*, and *creatures that howl;* to the music of their howlings the **satyrs** or *wild goats* (cf. Lev. 17:7) — demons (so the

22. And [1] wolves shall cry in their castles,
And jackals in the pleasant palaces:
And her time is near to come,
And her days shall not be prolonged.

Song of Triumph over the Fall of Babylon's King (14:1–23)

14. For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the stranger shall join himself with them, and they
2. shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

[1] Heb. *howling creatures.*

Greek version) incarnate — would dance; and soon in the **palaces** where pleasure reigned **jackals** would howl to each other.

The streets and happy halls of Babylon would be a grim desolation, with supernatural horror hanging about them. Such were not, in point of fact, the consequences of the capture of Babylon; the Hebrew poet is here giving expression to his passionate hopes.

14:1–23. This song is even more brilliant than the last. It describes with wonderful realism the joy of Israel and of the world at the downfall of the Babylonian oppressor, the ironical welcome he receives from the shades in the underworld, and the infinite contrast between his soaring ambitions and his humiliating fate.

1–4a. The real song begins with vs. 4b; vss. 1–4a serve to connect this song with the last. They bring out, in an intensely national and, in fact, ungenerous way, the significance of the fall of Babylon for Israel. The joy of the return to the home-land is very natural, and the vision of the **strangers**, or proselytes, being *joined* (in marriage, for example) to the Jews, is altogether worthy (cf. Is. 56:3–7, Zech. 2:11). But it is by the heathen that Israel is to be brought to her own land (cf. 49:23), and there they are to be the servants of their Jewish masters, who are themselves to

3. And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD
shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy
trouble, and from the hard service wherein thou wast
4. made to serve, that thou shalt take up this parable
against the king of Babylon, and say,

How hath the oppressor ceased!
The [1] golden city ceased!

5. The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked,
The sceptre of the rulers;
6. That smote the peoples in wrath
With a continual stroke,
That ruled the nations in anger,
With a persecution that none restrained.
7. The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet:
They break forth into singing.
8. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee,
And the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*,
"Since thou art laid low, no feller
Is come up against us."

9. [2] Hell from beneath is moved for thee
To meet thee at thy coming:

[1] m. *exactress.* [2] Heb. *Sheol.*

be spared all that sorrow, unrest, and toil, which is the general lot of man (Gen. 3:16 ff.; Job 14:1). Then follows the great *taunt-song* (rather than **parable**).

The Joy of the World at the Fall of the Mighty Tyrant (vss. 4b–8)

Read (in vs. 4): *How is the oppressor stilled — the storming stilled.* He is the *staff* which smote the peoples, and **trampled the nations in wrath** *with tramp* (not **persecution**) *unrelenting.* Well may earth break into a ringing cry, and even inanimate nature, like the stately **cedars of Lebanon**, that had been felled for purposes of building and instruments of war.

It stirreth up the [1] dead for thee,
Even all the [2] chief ones of the earth:
It hath raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
10. All they shall answer
And say unto thee,
"Art thou also become weak as we,
Art thou become like unto us?"
11. Thy pomp is brought down to [3] hell,
And the noise of thy viols:
The worm is spread under thee,
And worms cover thee.

12. How art thou fallen from heaven,
O day star, son of the morning! Rev. 8:10
How art thou cut down to the ground,
Which didst lay low the nations!

[1] m. *the shades;* Heb. *rephaim.* [2] Heb. *he-goats.* [3] Heb. *Sheol.*

The Excitement in the Underworld at the Approach of Babylon's King (vss. 9–11)

Earth is quiet; **Hell**, *i.e. Sheol*, the underworld, is moved; a fine contrast. It rouses the *shades* (cf. 1 Sam. 28:15) or ghosts (*rephaim*, same word as is used in Deut. 2:20 of extinct giants), all earth's **chief ones**, *leaders* (lit. bell-wethers) — dead *kings* are meant: kings on earth, shadow kings in the underworld. They rise to offer their ironical welcome to the newly arrived king, who is now not even a shadow-king — **worms** are his couch and his coverlet. Others have thrones, his fate among the worms is the worst of all. The music of his banquets has given place to music of a very different kind (13:21).

The King's Ambition and Fall (vss. 12–15)

Aspiring to heaven, to be worshipped like the *morning star, son of the dawn*, he is struck down to earth, yes, to Sheol, down to its lowest depths — he who on earth *laid nations prostrate*; or, by

13. And thou saidst in thine heart,
"I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne
Above the stars of God;
And I will sit upon the mount of congregation,
In the uttermost parts of the north:
14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will be like the Most High."
15. Yet thou shalt be brought down to [1] hell,
To the uttermost parts of the pit.

16. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee,
They shall consider thee, *saying*,
"Is this the man that made the earth to tremble,
That did shake kingdoms;
17. That made the world as a wilderness,
And overthrew the cities thereof;
That let not loose his prisoners
To their home?"
18. All the kings of the nations, all of them, sleep in glory,
Every one in his own house.
19. But thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre
Like an abominable branch,

[1] Heb. *Sheol.*

a suggested change, the words may mean, "now lying stiff (a corpse) upon corpses."

The **mount of congregation**, or *assembly* to which the king aspired, was *in the recesses of the* mysterious *north*, and apparently denotes the mountain where mythical imagination had apparently supposed the gods to meet.

The World's Astonishment at the King of Babylon's Fate (vss. 16–19)

Those who look upon his corpse are struck by the contrast between the power and glory of his life and the impotence and disgrace of his death.

Clothed with the slain,
That are thrust through with the sword,
That go down to the stones of the pit;
As a carcase trodden under foot.
20. Thou shalt not be joined
With them in burial,
Because thou hast destroyed thy land,
Thou hast slain thy people;
The seed of evil-doers
Shall not be named for ever.
21. Prepare ye slaughter for his children
For the iniquity of their fathers;

Probably the last clause of vs. 18 should be moved to vs. 17, and the whole read thus:

Who let not his prisoners go free,
Each to his house.
The kings of the nations, one and all
Rest in honor.

(*i.e.* in their splendid graves).

In contrast to the honorable burial of the other kings is the awful fate of Babylon's king. It is not unreasonable to suppose, with some scholars, that some words in vs. 19 have been accidentally transposed, and some perhaps omitted. The following restoration has been proposed:

How art thou cast out among the slain,
That are pierced by the sword,
Going down to the floor of the pit,
Like a corpse that is trodden on!
How art thou cut off from thy grave.
Like a scion abhorred!
How dost thou lie inglorious,
Clothed in shame.

For *scion* (here apparently = member of a family), a similar word meaning untimely birth has been proposed.

His Family shall be Exterminated (vss. 20, 21)

His doom shall be the extinction of his family — a doom justified by his tyranny. Vs. 20 should perhaps read: *As for thy*

That they rise not up, and possess the earth,
And fill the face of the world with [1] cities.

22. And I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon name and remnant,
23. and son and son's son, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.

JEHOVAH'S INVINCIBLE WORLD PLAN (14:24–27)

24. The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying,
Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass;
And as I have purposed, so shall it stand:
25. That I will break the Assyrian in my land,
And upon my mountains tread him under foot:
Then shall his yoke depart from off them,
And his burden depart from off their shoulder.

[1] Gr. *wars*.

fathers, *thou shalt not be joined with them*, etc.; and *the seed of the evildoer*, etc. Also in vs. 21, read *father* for **fathers**; and *with cities* (at the end) should perhaps be dropped.

22, 23. These verses, a sort of epilogue, repeat and confirm the assurance that Babylon will be utterly destroyed (cf. 13:21 f.).

This poem, like the last (Chap. 13) was written before the capture of Babylon in 538 B.C. The use of the perfect tense throughout in the Hebrew is a graphic way of representing the impending fall of the king as an already accomplished fact. Both these poems, especially the latter, are marked by intense emotional power, vivid imagination, and great literary skill. The contrasts between the quiet upon earth and the movement in Sheol, between the ambition of the king and his downfall, are executed with great dramatic power.

24–27. This oracle brings us back to the times and the work of Isaiah. It solemnly foretells the destruction of the Assyrian — probably Sennacherib and his army — **in my land**, *i.e.* Palestine (with 25b cf. 10:27). The sublime thought is reached that Je-

26. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth:
And this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.
27. For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?
And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

WARNING TO PHILISTIA (14:28–32)

28. In the year that king Ahaz died was this [1] burden.
29. Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee,
Because the rod that smote thee is broken:
For out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk,
And his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

[1] m. *oracle.*

hovah's plan is wide as the world, and no power can frustrate it. Very impressive is the figure of the outstretched **Hand** (cf. 9:12, etc.) which nothing can turn back. Isaiah has a splendid sense of the unity of history, and of the divine purpose that inspires and controls it. Vss. 26, 27 constitute one of the most daring and magnificent thoughts in the Old Testament — the invincible world-purpose of God.

28–32. The general sense of this brief oracle is plain, its particular application is obscure. It reminds Philistia that her joy at the destruction of her tyrant is ill-timed, as there is a worse tyranny to follow. But whether the new tyrant is the old, with strength recovered, or his successor, is not clear; and the obscurity is heightened by our uncertainty as to the year of King Ahaz's death. It is fairly certain that the tyrant alluded to is in both cases an Assyrian ruler — Sargon in both cases, if vs. 29 refers to a defeat which he sustained in Babylonia about 720 B.C.; if, however, the reference is to Sargon's death in 705 B.C., his *basilisk* successor would be Sennacherib. Philistine territory was repeatedly ravaged by the Assyrians.

29. For **fiery serpent** read *dragon.*

30. And the first-born of the poor shall feed,
And the needy shall lie down in safety:
And I will kill thy root with famine,
And thy remnant shall be slain.

31. Howl, O gate; cry, O city;
Thou art melted away, O Philistia, all of thee;
For there cometh a smoke out of the north,
[1] And none standeth aloof at his appointed times.

32. What then shall one answer
The messengers of the nation?
That the LORD hath founded Zion,
And in her shall the afflicted of his people take refuge.

[1] m. SV *there is no straggler in his ranks.*

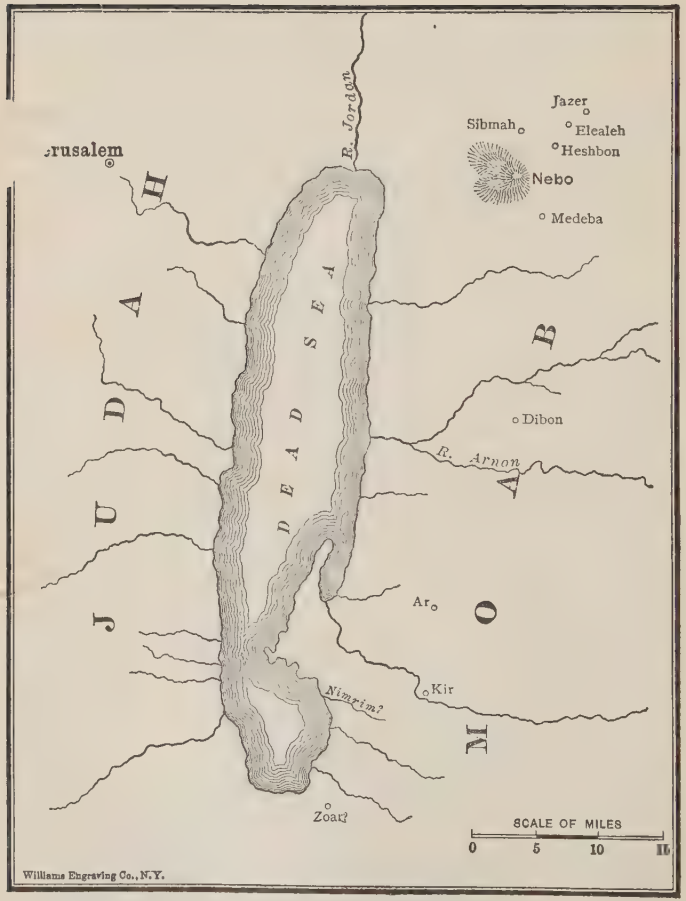
30. While the Philistines are doomed, the Judæans are safe; it is they that are meant by the needy and **the poor** who **shall feed** *on my meadows* (as we should probably read instead of **the firstborn of**). For **shall be slain**, read *I will slay*.

31. Philistia is called upon to **howl**, **cry**, and **melt away** (=imper.), because out of the north (cf. 10:28 ff.) comes the **smoke** of war, which reveals the trail of the Assyrian army, and *no straggler is found in his ranks* (cf. 5:27 ff.).

32. The **messengers of the nation**, *i.e.* the Philistine envoys, will come, in their terror, to solicit the aid of Judah; but Judah's answer, inspired by Isaiah, will be a refusal. Jerusalem is safe, *founded* and defended as she is by Jehovah himself.

Chaps. 15 and 16. With the exception of one or two verses (15:9; 16:2, 13 f.), which are in the prophetic strain, these two chapters (15, 16) constitute a lament over Moab, which has been devastated in some invasion. The invaders, who are not named, are probably either Israelites of the time of Jeroboam II (781–740 B.C.) who recovered much of Israel's ancient territory (2 Kings 14:25, 28), or possibly Arabian tribes from the desert.

The two chief fortresses have fallen before the invaders (15:1). The news of their fall spread northwards, bringing consternation wherever it goes. The people flee southwards to Edom; from there they send to Judah a pitiful appeal for protection. The appeal is rejected, and the poet continues his lamentation for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Lament over Moab (Chaps. 15 and 16)

15. The burden of Moab.
For in a night Ar of Moab
Is laid waste, *and* brought to nought:
For in a night Kir of Moab
Is laid waste, *and* brought to nought.
2. He is gone up to Bayith, and to Dibon,
To the high places, to weep:
Moab howleth over Nebo,
And over Medeba:
On all their heads is baldness,
Every beard is cut off.
3. In their streets they gird themselves with sackcloth:
On their housetops,
And in their broad places every one howleth,
Weeping abundantly.
4. And Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh;
Their voice is heard even unto Jahaz.

Moab, bewailing especially the fate of her glorious vineyards which now ring with shouts not of vintage, but of war; and no prayers shall avail to save her.

To this poem (15:1–16:12), which, whether we consider its literary style or its absence of prophetic thought, is probably not Isaiah's, but the work of a somewhat older poet, are appended two verses (16:13 f.), most probably Isaiah's (at any rate vs. 14), which regard the preceding lament as a prophecy and assert its fulfilment, *i.e.* the humiliation of Moab, within three years.

Consternation at the Fall of the Fortresses (vss. 1–4)

1. **Ar** on the Arnon (which flows into the Dead Sea at a point about the middle of its east side), and **Kir** (apparently = *Kir-heres* or *hareseth*, 16:7, 11) to the south of Ar, were the two chief fortified cities of Moab.

2–4. The news spreads north to **Dibon** (where in 1868 the now famous Moabite stone was found), further north to **Nebo**, due east of the northern end of the Dead Sea, **Medeba**, a little south of

Therefore the armed men of Moab cry aloud;
His soul trembleth within him.
5. My heart crieth out for Moab;
Her [1] nobles *flee* unto Zoar, to Eglath-shelishiyah:
For by the ascent of Luhith
With weeping they go up;
For in the way of Horonaim
They raise up a cry of destruction.
6. For the waters of Nimrim
Shall be desolate:
For the grass is withered away, the tender grass faileth,
There is no green thing.

7. Therefore the abundance they have gotten,
And that which they have laid up,
Shall they carry away
[2] To the brook of the willows.

[1] m. *fugitives*. [2] m. SV *over*.

Nebo, **Heshbon** and **Elealeh**, a little north. Vs. 2 should perhaps read: *The daughter* (=the people) *of Dibon* (cf. Jer. 48:18) *is gone up to the high places* (*i.e.* the sanctuaries) *to weep. Moab wails upon* (not *over*) *Nebo*, etc. Everywhere — in streets, on roofs, in squares, are to be heard and seen all the signs of mourning. For **the armed men**, etc., in vs. 4, read perhaps *the loins of Moab quiver*.

The Flight of the Moabites (vss. 5–9)

The people flee southwards. **Zoar** is at the southeast corner of the Dead Sea; **Eglath Shelishiyah**, perhaps=the third Eglath, in distinction from two others (cf. Jer. 48:34). **Luhith**, between Ar and Zoar; **Horonaim**, probably in the neighborhood of Zoar; **Nimrim**, between Horonaim and Zoar. *Its waters become desolations*, through being stopped by the enemy; for this and the destruction of the fruitful land, cf. 2 Kings 3:25. The fleeing Moabites carry their property with them over **the brook of the willows**, probably the brook at the southern end of the Dead Sea, which forms the *boundary* between Moab and Edom. The wail-

8. For the cry is gone round
About the borders of Moab;
The howling thereof unto Eglaim,
And the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.
9. For the waters of Dimon
Are full of blood:
For I will bring
Yet more upon Dimon,
A lion upon him that escapeth of Moab,
And upon the remnant of the land.

16. Send ye the lambs
For the ruler of the land
From [1] Sela *which is* toward the wilderness,
Unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.
2. For it shall be that, as wandering birds,
As a scattered nest,
So shall the daughters of Moab be
At the fords of Amon.

[1] m. *Petra*.

ing resounds as far as **Eglaim** in the south, and **Beer-elim**, possibly in the north (cf. Num. 21:16) and therefore = throughout the land, from N. to S., but probably in the south, as also apparently **Dimon**.

The last half of vs. 9 and 16:2 strike the prophetic note. **I** is of course Jehovah; and the **lion** is some yet fiercer enemy (cf. 14:29), — probably the Assyrian. This vs. should perhaps be directly followed by 16:2, which vividly compares the effect of *the lion's* appearance upon **the daughters** (*i.e.* the communities) **of Moab** to the panic and flight of alarmed birds.

Moab's Earnest Appeal to Judah for Protection (16:1, 3–5)

The fugitives are now in Edom, and **from Sela** (or *Petra*), its capital, *they sent* (so Duhm) lambs as tribute (exactly as the king of Moab does in 2 Kings 3:4) by way of **the wilderness** which separates Sela from Jerusalem, **to the mount of the daughter of**

3. Give counsel,
Execute judgement;
Make thy shadow as the night
In the midst of the noonday:
Hide the outcasts;
Bewray not the wanderer.
4. [1] Let mine outcasts
Dwell with thee;
As for Moab, be thou a covert to him
From the face of the spoiler.

For the extortioner is brought to nought,
Spoiling ceaseth,
The oppressors are consumed out of the land.
5. And a throne shall be established in mercy,
And one shall sit thereon in truth,
In the tent of David;
Judging, and seeking judgement,
And swift to do righteousness.
6. We have heard of the pride of Moab,
That he is very proud;
Even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his wrath;
His boastings are nought.

[1] m. Gr. Syr. Tar. *let the outcasts of Moab dwell with thee.*

Zion; *i.e.* they supplicate the help of Judah, saying, "**Give counsel**, *make* your *decision* in our behalf, when the enemy demand our surrender; be to us as a protecting **shadow** (cf. 32:2). *Let the outcasts of Moab dwell as sojourners with* (and therefore protected by) *thee*, etc. *When* (rather than *for*) *the oppressor is no more . . . then shall the throne* (apparently of Judah) *be established in loving-kindness, and there shall sit upon it . . . one who judges and seeks justice*," etc.

6. The very earnest and flattering appeal of Moab is rejected, because Judah knows too well Moab's *pride and insolence and baseless pratings*, illustrated in part by this very appeal.

7. Therefore shall Moab howl for Moab,
Every one shall howl:
For the raisin-cakes of Kir-hareseth
Shall ye mourn, utterly stricken.
8. For the fields of Heshbon languish,
And the vine of Sibmah;
[1] The lords of the nations have broken down
The choice plants thereof;
They reached even unto Jazer,
They wandered into the wilderness;
Her branches were spread abroad,
They passed over the sea.

9. Therefore I will weep with the weeping of Jazer
For the vine of Sibmah:
I will water thee with my tears,
O Heshbon and Elealeh:

[1] m. *her choice plants did break down the lords of nations.*

Moab's Lament (vss. 7, 8)

Her appeal is rejected, therefore Moab wails. The attack appears to have been made in autumn, the season of the vintage, and through vss. 7–11 runs the wail for the destruction of Moab's famous vineyards. There are now no grape or **raisin cakes** to celebrate the vintage festival (cf. Hos. 3:1). For *Kir-hareseth* and *Kir-heres* (vs. 11) cf. 15:1; *Heshbon*, 15:4; *Sibmah*, near Heshbon. The famous *red grapes had smitten down*, *i.e.* intoxicated, *the lords of the nations* — princes in many lands. The writer "represents the whole vine culture of the district under the image of a single vine, which **reached to Jazer** in the north, **strayed to the desert** on the east, and **passed to the (Dead) Sea** on the west" (Skinner).

The Poet's Lament (vss. 9–11)

The poet shares Jazer's sorrow at the devastation of the vineyards. The glad shout of the vintage has been exchanged for the terrible shout of war.

For upon thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest
The *battle* shout is fallen.

10. And gladness is taken away, and joy
Out of the fruitful field;
And in the vineyards there shall be no singing,
Neither joyful noise:
No treader shall tread out wine in the presses;
I have made the *vintage* shout to cease.

11. Wherefore my bowels sound
Like an harp for Moab,
And mine inward parts for Kir-heres.

12. And it shall come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself, when he wearieth himself upon the high place, and shall come to his sanctuary to pray, that he shall not prevail.

13. This is the word that the LORD spake concerning
14. Moab in time past. But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, "Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and of no account."

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12. Moab's calamity would drive him to pray to his god Chemosh, but his prayer would be futile. Perhaps we should simply read: *When Moab wearies himself* (omitting *presenteth*).

13, 14. Vs. 13 regards the preceding lament as a prophecy given **in time past**, which, according to vs. 14, will be fulfilled — doubtless by the Assyrians **within three years**, a **hireling** or *mercenary soldier's* time of service.

The wealth of unfamiliar proper names in this elegy has partly obscured for us its real poetic merit. The poem is written with much feeling, and in places (cf. 16:8–10) with real literary power. The passage has been utilized in the oracle on Moab in Jer. 48. Moab must have possessed at this time a relatively high civilization. Six or seven of the place-names here mentioned occur also on the Moabite stone, which was erected about 850 B.C.

Prophecy concerning Damascus and Northern Israel (17 : 1–11)

The Destruction of Damascus (17 : 1–3)

17. The [1] burden of Damascus.
Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city,
And it shall be a ruinous heap.
2. [2] The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks,
Which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.
3. The fortress also shall cease from Ephraim,
And the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria;
They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel,
Saith the Lord of hosts.

[1] m. *oracle concerning.* [2] Gr. *forsaken for ever.*

by Mesha the king to commemorate his victories over Israel, and discovered among the ruins of Dibon in 1868 A.D.

17 : 1–11. This prophecy deals not only, as the superscription suggests, with Damascus, the capital of Syria (Aram), but even more specifically with Israel, announcing the utter destruction of the former kingdom, and the all but utter destruction of the latter.

The prophecy falls about 735 B.C., at any rate before the united assault of Syria and Israel upon Judah alluded to in 7 : 1 f.

2. As nothing is known of a Syrian **Aroer**, though by the context it ought to be a well-known district or city, we may adopt the slight change of text, supported in part by the Greek version, which would give us:

A ruin shall she be *for ever*,
Her cities shall be for flocks.

3. **Ephraim**, *i.e.* northern Israel, shall lose her **fortress**, *i.e.* either Samaria, the capital city, or possibly Syria, which was Israel's *bulwark* against the advance of Assyria. The last clauses should perhaps read,

And the remnant of Syria shall perish,
They shall be as the children of Israel.

The Doom of Israel (17:4–11)

4. And it shall come to pass on that day, that
The glory of Jacob shall be made thin,
And the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.
5. And it shall be as when the harvestman gathereth the standing corn,
And his arm reapeth the ears;
Yea, it shall be as when one gleaneth ears
In the valley of Rephaim.
6. Yet there shall be left therein gleanings,
As the [1] shaking of an olive tree,
Two or three berries
In the top of the uppermost bough,
Four or five
In the outmost branches of a fruitful tree,
Saith the LORD, the God of Israel.
7. In that day shall a man look unto his Maker,
And his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel.
8. And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands,
Neither shall he have respect to that which his fingers

[1] m. Heb. *beating*.

The powerful city was doomed to be a quiet pasture land. In point of fact, Damascus fell before the Assyrians, in 732 B.C.

4–6. Israel's doom (**Jacob** = Israel) is sealed **in that day** — the day when Damascus falls, for Damascus was Israel's *bulwark* (vs. 3). The doom is described in three figures: (i) as a wasting away of the body, (ii) as the meagre gleanings of corn which might be gathered after harvest in the plain of **Rephaim**, southwest of Jerusalem, and (iii) as the few berries left upon an olive-tree after its branches have been beaten. Israel's ruin will not be utter, like Syria's, but very nearly so.

have made, either the Asherim, or the sun-images.

9. In that day shall his strong cities be
As the forsaken places[1] in the wood and on the mountain top, which were forsaken before the children of Israel; and it shall be a desolation.

10. For thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation,
And hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength;

[1] m. Gr. *of the Amorites and the Hivites.*

7, 8. These verses do not perhaps belong to the original poem, as they somewhat interrupt its continuity, and interfere with its metrical arrangement. They describe the effect of the judgment upon Israel in leading *mankind* (not only **a man**, *i.e.* an Israelite) to a reverent regard for their *Creator*, and to a complete rejection of idolatry. To a Hebrew prophet hand-made gods were contemptible (cf. the scorn in 40:20). The metre suggests that *the altars*, *the asherim*, and *the sun-images* were added later to explain "the work of their hands." Without these words, we have two well-balanced lines.

The numerous **altars** are rejected, for, at the time when this word was added, only the one altar at Jerusalem was regarded as legitimate. The **asherim** were sacred poles — probably a survival of tree worship — which stood beside Canaanitish altars and even beside the altars of Jehovah (2 Kings 18:4; 23:6), but which were finally forbidden in the Jehovah worship (Deut. 16:21). The *sun-pillars* point to the worship of the sun.

9. There can be little doubt that, instead of the very obscure text at the beginning of this verse, we should, following a valuable hint of the Greek version, read:

In that day shall thy cities be deserted
Like the deserted (cities) of the Amorites and the Hivites,

i.e. the ancient inhabitants of Canaan — the latter part of the verse (from *which*) being regarded as an explanatory gloss. Isaiah has in view Israel's devastation at the hands of the Assyrians.

10 f. Israel's league with Syria, besides turning her away from her own God, brought with it the worship of the Syrian god Adonis. But this worship, however sedulously cultivated, says the prophet, will not save Israel from the coming disaster.

Therefore thou plantest [1] pleasant plants,
And settest it with [2] strange slips:
11. In the day of thy planting thou hedgest it in,
And in the morning thou makest thy seed to blossom:
But the harvest fleeth away in the day of grief
And of desperate sorrow.

The Speedy Doom of the Assyrians (17:12–18:7)

Their Sudden Destruction (17:12–14)

12. Ah, the uproar of many peoples,
Which roar like the roaring of the seas;
And the rushing of nations,
That rush like the rushing of mighty waters!

[1] m. *plantings of Adonis;* Gr. Vg. *a faithless plant.* [2] m. *vine slips of a strange god.*

Though thou plantest Adonis plants,
And dost set (thy garden) with the scions of a stranger (i.e. strange god):
Though in the day when thou plantest, thou makest it grow,
And in the morning when thou sowest thou dost bring it to blossom;
Yet surely the harvest shall vanish in the day of sickness,
And sorrow incurable (shall be thine).

The **strange god** (so margin) is Adonis, who is no doubt alluded to in the word *pleasant* (vs. 10). The **pleasant plants** are the so-called "Adonis gardens," which played a conspicuous part in the Adonis festivals — "flower pots with all kinds of artificially developed plants, flowers, etc., which withered as quickly as they had grown," and which were therefore an apt symbol of the futility of the Syrian alliance.

17:12–18:7. In these verses are two short oracles (17:12–14 and 18:1–7) connected in theme, and probably produced about the same time — between 705 and 701 B.C., when Sennacherib and his Assyrians were becoming an ever more formidable menace to Judah. Common to both is the serenity with which Isaiah contemplates their tumultuous advance, and the clearness with which he foresees and foretells their doom.

12. This is a very spirited passage. Through its well-chosen Hebrew words one vividly hears the roar of the sea, to which is

13. The nations shall rush
Like the rushing of many waters:
But he shall rebuke them,
And they shall flee far off, and shall be chased
As the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
And like the whirling dust before the storm.
14. At eventide behold terror;
And before the morning they are not.
This is the portion of them that spoil us,
And the lot of them that rob us.

Isaiah's Answer to the Ethiopian Ambassadors (Chap. 18)

18. Ah, the land of [1] the rustling of wings,
Which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:
2. That sendeth ambassadors by the sea,
Even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters, *saying*,

[1] Gr. *winged boats.*

compared the tumult of the many and *mighty nations* (as we should read in the second half of vs. 12) that went to make up the Assyrian army.

13 f. Threshing floors were often set upon a height where the wind could easily bear **the chaff** away. **Terror** in Jerusalem because of the Assyrian army. These verses describe the completeness and the suddenness with which these foreign *plunderers* and *robbers* would be destroyed. Cf. 37:36.

18:1–7. Ethiopia, the land to the south of Egypt, and now her mistress, had despatched an embassy to Jerusalem, for some purpose which is not definitely stated, but which had no doubt to do with an alliance against the common enemy Assyria. Isaiah implicitly rejects their overtures by his courteous and serene assurance that Jehovah himself would speedily seal the doom of the Assyrians.

1. Ethiopia (modern Nubia) is the **land of the rustling of** insect **wings** — probably an allusion in particular to the tsetse-fly in which the Nile lands abound. It is vaguely described as **beyond the rivers of Ethiopia**, *i.e.* the White and the Blue Nile.

2. By the **sea** the river Nile is meant, and down its **waters** the

Go, ye swift messengers,
To a nation tall and smooth,
To a people terrible from their beginning onward:
A nation that meteth out and treadeth down,
Whose land the rivers divide!

3. All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye dwellers on the earth,
When an ensign is lifted up on the mountains, see ye;
And when the trumpet is blown, hear ye.

4. For thus hath the LORD said unto me,
"I will be still, and I will behold in my dwelling place;
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the [1] heat of harvest.

[1] Gr. Vg. Syr. *day.*

ambassadors travel in swift light boats made of papyrus. The word *saying* (RV), which has no Hebrew warrant, obscures the point and should be deleted. In reality, **Go** introduces the speech of *Isaiah* to the ambassadors, now arrived at Jerusalem. The Ethiopians are described by the prophet in complimentary terms as **tall and smooth**, or rather of *polished* bronze-like skin, *dreaded near and far, a nation of strength and victory, whose land the* Nile *streams divide.* They are known to have been remarkable for their beauty and stature (the obscure words of the last half of vs. 2 seem best rendered as above).

3. The announcement of Jehovah's impending triumph concerns not only Ethiopia, but the whole **world**. Universal attention will be called to it by the rising of a *standard* and the blast of a **trumpet** — words to be taken not literally but poetically, as symbols of Jehovah's sudden and victorious intervention.

Vss. 4–6 contain the real message — especially 5 f.

4. The majestic confidence with which Isaiah awaits and foretells the issue is but a reflex of the serenity with which his God contemplates it all. Jehovah looks *quietly* on, still **as the** shimmering **heat in sunshine** when the glow is intense, or **as the** high motionless **dew-clouds in the heat of harvest** — two pictures beautifully suggestive of the sublime peace of Jehovah. The words **Thus Jehovah said to me** apparently indicate that this

5. For afore the harvest, when the blossom is over,
And the flower becometh a ripening grape,
He shall cut off the sprigs with pruning-hooks,
And the spreading branches shall he take away *and* cut down.
6. They shall be left together unto the ravenous birds of the mountains,
And to the beasts of the earth:
And the ravenous birds shall summer upon them,
And all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.
7. In that time shall a present be brought unto the LORD of hosts [3] of a people tall and smooth, and from a people terrible from their beginning onward; a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

THE DESTINY OF EGYPT (Ch. 19)

The Disasters of Egypt (19:1–15)

19. The [1] burden of Egypt.

[1] Gr. Vg. *from.* [2] m. *oracle concerning.*

great vision and message of peace came to Isaiah in a moment of ecstasy.

5. The doom of the Assyrians will come upon them as an immense surprise; just when their plans are ripe for execution, they will be swiftly and terribly frustrated. The figures are borrowed from the vintage; just when the grapes are almost ready for gathering, the branches will be hewn mercilessly down.

6. Figure changes to fact. The number of Assyrian slain shall be so great that for a whole **summer** and **winter** *wild* beasts and birds shall feast upon them.

7. It is pretty generally acknowledged that this vs., with its

Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud,
And cometh unto Egypt:
And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence,
And the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

2. And I will stir up the Egyptians against the Egyptians:
And they shall fight every one against his brother,
And every one against his neighbour; city against city,
And kingdom against kingdom.

Mat. 24:7
Mk. 13:8 ‖
Lk. 21:10

repetitions of vs. 2, is much later than Isaiah. In the spirit of a later age, it contemplates the "latter days" when Ethiopia would acknowledge Israel's God, and come to Jerusalem, *the place of his name*, to offer him gifts of homage (cf. Zeph. 3:10). For "*of* a people" read "*from* a people."

The serenity of Isaiah in face of the Assyrian menace recalls his composure on a former occasion, when every other heart was thrown into consternation at the projected invasion of Judah by the joint forces of Israel and Syria (7:1–7). In all such crises his faith "establishes" him (7:9).

Chap. 19. The oracle on Egypt appropriately succeeds that addressed to the Ethiopians (Chap. 18). For Egypt the doom is announced of civil war and oppression at the hands of a hard master. With these political calamities are associated disasters of another kind — the drying up of the Nile, and the decay of fishing and weaving; and all the ancient and famous wisdom of Egypt shall be unable to cope with this distress, which has been sent upon her by the God of Israel (vss. 1–15). In their terror, however, the Egyptians will cry to this God, who will reveal himself to them, and be, in consequence, honored and worshipped on Egyptian soil. Then Egypt and Assyria will unite in the common worship of Jehovah; a triple alliance will be formed between Egypt, Assyria, and Israel, and they shall all be Jehovah's people (vss. 16–25).

Civil War and Oppression (vss. 1–4)

1. Jehovah **rides** on a storm **cloud** (as in Ps. 18:10) to Egypt, to execute his will upon her people; and before this mighty God the **idols**, or *impotent gods of Egypt quake*, and the people share their terror.

2, 3. Civil war breaks out, and the people so lose head and

3. And the spirit of Egypt shall be made void in the midst of it;
And I will destroy the counsel thereof:
And they shall seek unto the idols, and to the charmers,
And to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

4. And I will give over the Egyptians
Into the hand of a cruel lord;
And a fierce king shall rule over them,
Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

5. And the waters shall fail from the sea,
And the river shall be wasted and become dry.
6. And the rivers shall stink;
The streams of Egypt shall be minished and dried up:

The reeds and flags shall wither away.
7. [1] The meadows by the Nile, by the brink of the Nile,

[1] Gr. *all the green reedgrass round about the river.*

heart that they resort to occult means of ascertaining the divine will — to **charmers**, *i.e. mutterers* of magical spells, *ghosts and familiar spirits* (cf. 8:19).

4. Finally, a prey to confusion and despair, Egypt comes under the domination of *a harsh* and probably foreign *master*. Who this is, will depend upon our view of the date and origin of the prophecy — an Assyrian ruler, Sargon or Sennacherib, if the prophecy be Isaiah's.

The Drying up of the Nile and the Extinction of Fishing and Weaving
(vss. 5–10)

5, 6. By the **sea** and the **river** the Nile is meant. The **streams**, lit. *Niles*, *i.e.* arms or canals of the Nile, *become dry: reed and rush decay.*

7. The first two clauses, which are obscure, may have run somewhat as follows: *All withered are the reeds by the banks of the Nile.*

And all that is sown by the Nile,
Shall become dry, be driven away, and be no more.

8. The fishers also shall lament,
And all they that cast angle into the Nile shall mourn,
And they that spread nets
Upon the waters shall languish.

9. Moreover they that work in combed flax,
And they that weave white cloth, shall be ashamed.
10. And her pillars shall be broken in pieces,
[1] All they that work for hire shall be grieved in soul.

11. The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish;
The counsel of the wisest counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish:
How say ye unto Pharaoh,
"I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings"?

1 Cor. 1:20 12. Where then are thy wise men?
And let them tell thee now;

[1] Gr. *all that make beer.*

8 f. There was fishing both by hook and net; but when the Nile is dried up (vss. 5, 6), there can be no more fishing. Other industries also languish.

10. The first clause, with its difficult **pillars** or *foundations*, should perhaps read:
And those who weave it (*i.e.* the flax) *are broken* (*in heart*).

The Helplessness of Egypt (vss. 11–15)

11 f. **Zoan**, a great and ancient city, on one of the eastern branches of the Nile. The wisdom or "lore of the many past centuries was concentrated in the priestly class, to which not only the kings, but the principal officers of the state belonged" (Cheyne); but *Pharaoh's wisest counsellors have been a silly council.* Vs. 12 is an ironical address to Pharaoh. For "let them *know*" read "let them *make known*" (so the Greek version).

And [1] let them know what the LORD of hosts
Hath purposed concerning Egypt.

13. The princes of Zoan are become fools,
The princes of Noph are deceived;
They have caused Egypt to go astray,
That are the corner stone of her tribes.

14. The LORD hath mingled a spirit
Of perverseness in the midst of her;
And they have caused Egypt to go astray in every work thereof,
As a drunken man [2] staggereth in his vomit.
15. Neither shall there be for Egypt any work,
Which head or tail, palm-branch or rush, may do.

The Conversion of Egypt (19:16–25)

16. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall tremble and fear because of the shaking of the hand of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it.
17. And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto

[1] Gr. Vg. *let them make known.* [2] m. *goeth astray.*

13–15. **Noph**, *i.e.* Memphis, near Cairo, the capital of lower Egypt. The **cornerstone**, *i.e.* chiefs, rulers, **of her tribes**, *i.e.* the nomes or districts (=*kingdoms* of vs. 2) into which Egypt was divided, have, through their own mental confusion and perplexity, the **spirit of perverseness** or giddiness which Jehovah has poured out upon them—*led Egypt astray:* with the result that no concerted action is possible (cf. vs. 2). **Palm-branch and rush** = high and low (cf. 9:14).

Vss. 16, 17 mediate the transition between this section (vss. 16–25) and the last. The calamities into which Egypt has been thrown by the terrible hand of Jehovah inspire in Egypt a dread also of Judah, Jehovah's land, and the way is prepared for Egypt's conversion, through her submission to the influence of Judah.

Egypt, every one to whom mention is made thereof
shall be afraid, because of the purpose of the LORD of
hosts, which he purposeth against it.

18. In that day there shall be five cities in the land of
Egypt that speak the language of Canaan, and swear
to the LORD of hosts; one shall be called The city of
[1] destruction.

[1] Heb. *heres* (=destruction?); Gr. *tsedeq* (=righteousness). Some Heb. MSS. read *heres* (=the sun).

This submission is apparently what is meant by Jehovah's **purpose** in vs. 17.

A series of brief oracles follows, each introduced by *in that day*.

The Hebrew Religion and Language in Egypt (vs. 18)

Are those five cities which are to speak **the language of Canaan** (*i.e.* Hebrew) Jewish or Egyptian cities? Apparently Jewish; for, considering that Jews resident in foreign countries did not always themselves speak Hebrew (cf. Acts 2:5, 8, 9, etc.), and that even in Egypt most of them spoke Greek (the Septuagint being written to meet the needs of Egyptian Jews), it would be too much to expect the Egyptians to speak Hebrew. The cities were therefore probably Jewish colonies, whose presence naturally brought the Jewish religion — the worship of **Jehovah of hosts** — with all its possibilities, very close to the Egyptians.

One of these cities was to be called "The city of *heres*." This, which means **the city of destruction**, would be a strange name to apply to such a city, unless the allusion be to the destruction of Egyptian idolatry. The Greek version calls the city "the city of *tsedeq*," of righteousness; and as this Hebrew word bears little resemblance to *heres*, the question may be fairly raised whether, for some reason, a change has not been deliberately made. The suspicion that the original word was in some way felt to be unsatisfactory is confirmed by the existence of another reading, presupposed by some ancient witnesses and very closely resembling our present Hebrew text, viz., *heres*, which would mean "the city of *the sun*," and refer no doubt to Heliopolis (=On, Gen. 41:50). Possibly this is the original reading, altered to *righteousness* and *destruction* respectively by those who approved or disapproved of the temple at Leontopolis, which appears to be alluded to in the following verse. As, however, *haris* is in Arabic an epithet of

19. In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in
the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the
20. border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign
and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land
of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because
of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour,
21. and a defender, and he shall deliver them. And the
LORD shall [1] be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians
shall know the LORD in that day; yea, they shall wor-
ship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow
22. unto the LORD, and shall perform it. And the LORD
shall smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall
return unto the LORD, and he shall be intreated of
them, and shall heal them.

[1] m. *make himself known.*

the lion, it has been conjectured with some plausibility that even in this verse the allusion is to Leontopolis, "the city of *the lion*."

The Worship of Jehovah by the Egyptians (vss. 19–22)

19. **An altar.** This is by some recent scholars regarded as a reference to the Jewish temple at Leontopolis, built by Onias IV in 160 B.C. The sacred stone erected near a shrine was called **pillar**, lit. something *set up*. Whether this is intended here, or only a memorial pillar, perhaps conceived like an Egyptian obelisk, its place **at the border** is significant, suggesting to those who cross the line that Jehovah is worshipped in Egypt.

20. Altar and pillar are a **sign** and **witness** that Egypt is now Jehovah's land, and that her people can claim and will receive his protection, like ancient Israel in the time of the Judges; *when they cry* to him, he will send them a **saviour**, who *will contend* (rather than **a defender**) **and deliver them**.

21. Jehovah, by his deliverance of them, *will* thus *make himself known* to the Egyptians, who in turn will acknowledge him in worship which will take the form of ritual *service* — *sacrifice* of animals and bloodless *offerings* — and (perhaps Nazirite) *vows*.

22. When he smites the Egyptians, it will be, as with ancient Israel, for purposes of discipline; their penitent prayer will be answered by restoration.

23. In that day shall there be a high way out of Egypt
to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt,
and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians
shall worship with the Assyrians.
24. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and
with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth:
25. for that the LORD of hosts hath blessed them, saying,
Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of
my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

The Triple Alliance (vss. 23–25)

23. Egypt and Assyria, the great historical enemies of Israel, are now conceived as united in the common *service* of Jehovah, Israel's God; and now that they are at peace, their lands are connected by a common **highway**.

24 f. Read: *In the midst of the earth, which Jehovah of hosts has blessed.* In these verses we have one of the most generous visions of the Old Testament. The three powers, Egypt, Assyria, Israel — representing practically the whole world — each power in time past frequently hostile to the other two, are now united in the bonds of peace, and of a common worship, and over all three rests the blessing of Jehovah. It is just possible that even here a certain uniqueness is implicitly claimed for Israel in the words **mine inheritance**; but this can hardly be pressed, when we consider that Egypt is to be called **my people**, which throughout the Old Testament is a familiar designation for Israel.

The difference between the two halves into which this chapter is divided is very striking. It affects both style and contents. The first half is in verse, and is continuous; the second in prose, and somewhat broken. The attitude to the Egyptians is much more friendly and favorable in the second half than in the first; the first anticipates for them a *cruel lord* (vs. 4), the second a *saviour* (vs. 20).

The very definite reference in vs. 18 to Hebrew-speaking cities in Egypt, and the specific mention of one of them, whether the allusion be to Heliopolis or Leontopolis, would seem to point to post-exilic days, when there were extensive Jewish colonies in Egypt, and consequently to carry us to an age much later than Isaiah's. That age is perhaps definitely fixed by vs. 19, which can be very naturally explained as an allusion to the temple at Leontopolis built in 160 B.C. At first, indeed, this very verse

Warning against the Folly of an Alliance with Egypt (20:1–6)

20. In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought

may seem to tell powerfully in favor of the Isaianic authorship, as the *pillar* here associated with Jehovah was proscribed a century after Isaiah by the Deuteronomic law (Deut. 12:3). But we know that the Egyptian Jews were not so strict as the Palestinian; and in any case, the temple at Leontopolis must itself have been an offence to the strict Palestinian Jews, to whom the Jerusalem temple was the only legitimate sanctuary. These verses seem therefore to justify us in placing the whole passage (vss. 16–25) about the middle of the second century B.C., about five and a half centuries after Isaiah's time. In that case Assyria would stand for Syria, as in Ezra 6:22 for Persia (cf. Ezr. 9:9). It is just possible, after all, however, that the passage is earlier, as there is reason to believe that there were Jewish colonies in Egypt in the seventh century B.C.

The former passage (vss. 1–15), however, has been claimed for Isaiah by some who are willing to concede the post-exilic authorship of vss. 16–25. It lacks, however, some of the qualities which we should expect in a work of Isaiah's. It is not definitely related to any historical situation, the sin of Egypt which justifies her punishment is not made clear, and the style, especially of vss. 5–10, is somewhat prolix. Altogether, the Isaianic authorship of vss. 1–15 is very far from certain; on the other hand, the temper and attitude of the passage is so different from vss. 17–25 that it is very probably from a different, and earlier, hand. In that case, it may reflect one of the struggles of Egypt with Persia, and the *cruel lord* would be not an Assyrian, but a Persian. Where the descriptions are so general, we cannot rise above conjecture.

The passage vss. 18–25 exhibits a fine consciousness of the uniqueness of the Jewish religion, and of its power to conquer the world. Through Jewish colonists, it finds a lodgment in Egypt, and wins the Egyptians, and it is the bond that binds together in peace the hostile nations of the world. The Jews have often been condemned for their ungenerous and exclusively national outlook; but surely such a criticism finds its answer and rebuke in the wonderful vision of the triple alliance in which Israel takes her place by the side of Egypt and Assyria, and hears the divine blessing pronounced upon those once hostile and heathen nations no less than upon herself.

20:1–6. The references to Egypt in this chapter (vss. 3–5)

2. against Ashdod and took it; at that time the LORD
spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose
the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put thy shoe from
off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and bare-
3. foot. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah
hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign
4. and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so
shall the king of Assyria lead away the captives of
Egypt, and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old,
naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to
5. the shame of Egypt. And they shall be dismayed and

connect it naturally with the last, with which, however, it has nothing to do chronologically. Isaiah indicates here in symbolic prophecy — by going for three years in the garb of a captive, without mantle or shoes — the fate of captivity in store for the Egyptians and Ethiopians at the hands of the Assyrians. His object was to dissuade the people of Judah from entangling themselves in an Egyptian alliance.

1. Relying upon Ethiopia, which was then mistress of Egypt, **Ashdod**, an important Philistine city, had formed, with the neighboring states, including Judah, a league against Assyria. The **Tartan** (the official title for the Assyrian commander-in-chief) besieged and captured Ashdod in 711 B.C. **Sargon** was the king of Assyria (722–705 B.C.) who destroyed the power of northern Israel by the capture of Samaria in 721.

2–4. Isaiah symbolically wears the garb of a captive, going **barefoot** and **naked**, *i.e.* in his undergarment only (cf. Jn. 21:7). The **sackcloth**, which he put off, and which was worn as a sign of mourning (15:3), was no doubt the coarse hairy mantle worn both in earlier (2 Kings 1:8) and later times (Zech. 13:4) by prophets. From vs. 3 we learn that he had gone thus for **three years**. For a man of Isaiah's standing thus to appear in the streets of Jerusalem must have been provocative of many questionings; to which the answer was this — that he did it **for a sign and a wonder** (cf. 8:18), and as *the servant of Jehovah*, whose commission he was in this act executing. His appearance was *symbolic* of the fate in store for Egypt and Ethiopia at the hands of Assyria. Perhaps "to *the shame* of Egypt" should be omitted, as a gloss on the word "buttocks."

5, 6. As Egypt had been impotent to save Ashdod from Assyria,

ashamed, because of Ethiopia their expectation, and of
6. Egypt their glory. And the inhabitant of this coastland shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and we, how shall we escape?

The Fall of Babylon (21:1–17)

The Fall of Babylon: its Consequences for Judah (21: 1–10)

21. The [1] burden of the wilderness [2] of the sea.
As whirlwinds in the South
Sweep through,

[1] m. *oracle concerning.* [2] Gr. om. *of the sea.*

so she would prove impotent to save **the inhabitants of this coastland**, *i.e.* in general, Palestine — Isaiah is thinking more particularly of Judah, and indirectly warning her against an alliance with Egypt. If such is the fate of Egypt, "how shall we escape — *we?*" (emphatic). *They* of vs. 5 are the people of the coastland in vs. 6. As it happened, Egypt did not suffer at this time from Assyria the fate which Isaiah had anticipated for her; nevertheless his message was effective, as Hezekiah took the hint and resumed his vassalage to Assyria.

Chap. 21. The impending fall of Babylon must have been awaited by patriotic Jews with the most intense emotion. In Chaps. 13 and 14 we have seen one poet, in anticipation of it, break out into wild strains of triumph. This poet anticipates the fall of the city in a more neutral spirit, but his real feelings shine through his allusion to Israel in vs. 10 as the people threshed and trodden upon the floor. The passage must fall between Cyrus's conquest of Media in 549 B.C. — for Medians are in the invading army (vs. 2) — and his capture of Babylon in 538. It suggests the consequences of the fall of Babylon for Judah, Edom, and the desert tribes of North Arabia.

1. For **the burden**, etc., read *Oracle on the Wilderness.* **Wilderness**, like *Arabia* in vs. 13, is probably simply a catchword taken from the oracle itself (vs. 1), and the word rendered by **the sea**

It cometh from the wilderness,
From a terrible land.
2. A grievous vision
Is declared unto me;
The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously,
And the spoiler spoileth.
"Go up, O Elam;
Besiege, O Media;
All the sighing thereof
Have I made to cease."

3. Therefore are my loins
Filled with anguish;
Pangs have taken hold upon me,
As the pangs of a woman in travail:
I am pained so that I cannot hear;
I am dismayed so that I cannot see.
4. My heart [1] panteth,
Horror hath affrighted me:

[1] Heb. *wandereth.*

may be a mutilated form of the first word of the oracle; perhaps — *it rages like storms that sweep on in the southland, i.e.* the dry region to the south of Judah, where the prophet possibly had his home (cf. vs. 12). **It**, *i.e.* the noise of the attack on Babylon, **comes from the wilderness** lying between Palestine and Babylon, which is here described as the **terrible land.**

2. The ecstasy has begun. The seer hears sounds (vs. 1) and sees a vision of Babylon assailed by *robbers* and *spoilers*, *i.e.* the soldiers of Cyrus's army, from **Elam** (east of the lower Tigris and north of the Persian gulf) and **Media** (north of Elam). The last clause of the vs., if genuine, must be conceived as spoken by Jehovah, and the **sighing** would be that of the people oppressed by Babylon.

3, 4. These vss. graphically describe the excitement into which the seer has been thrown by his vision. **My heart** (practically =

The twilight that I desired
Hath been turned into trembling unto me.

5. They prepare the table,
They [1] set the watch, they eat, they drink:
Rise up, ye princes,
Anoint the shield.

6. For thus hath the Lord
Said unto me,
"Go, set a watchman;
Let him declare what he seeth:

7. And when he seeth [2] a troop,
Horsemen in pairs,
A troop of asses,
A troop of camels,
He shall hearken diligently
With much heed."

8. And he cried as a lion,
"O Lord, I stand

[1] m. *spread the carpets*; Gr. om. [2] m. *chariot* or *chariots*.

my head) *wanders*. **The twilight that I desired**, *i.e.* the pleasant evening hours with their quiet and rest; the vision came in the evening.

5. It is during a Babylonian banquet, as at Belshazzar's feast in Dan. 5, that the seer sees the attack made, and hears the call to the effeminate Babylonian princes to **rise** and **anoint** their **shields**, *i.e.* apparently to rub the leather straps with oil, so as not to cut the arm. For **they set the watch**, read with the margin, *they spread the carpets*, *i.e.* for reclining on.

6. The seer is in ecstatic mood, and the **watchman** or *spy* is himself, his other or ecstatic self, which sees, as in a vision, what is going on in distant Babylon, and reports to the seer's proper self.

7. The vision is one of war — cavalry, and beasts of burden to carry off the prey.

8, 9. Perhaps for the **lion**, which is rather irrelevant, we should

Continually upon the watch-tower
In the day-time,
And am set in my ward
Whole nights":
9. And behold, here cometh a troop of men,
Horsemen in pairs.
And he answered and said,
Rev. 14:8 "Babylon is fallen, is fallen;
And all the graven images of her gods
Are broken unto the ground."

10. O thou my threshing,
And the [1] corn of my floor:
That which I have heard
From the LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel,
Have I declared unto you.

[1] SV *grain.* Heb. *son.*

read: "and he cried: *I see.*" After long gazing, he at length sees the warriors and knows that they betoken the *fall of Babylon.* The other part of the vision, in which the images of Babylon's gods were shivered to pieces, was not fulfilled; Cyrus even spoke of himself as having been called by Marduk, the chief god of Babylon.

10. This vs. hints at the happy consequences for the Hebrew exiles of the fall of Babylon. What the seer has *heard*, *i.e.* the story of her fall, he *declares.* **My threshing and the son** (cf. margin) **of my floor** is a pathetic description of Judah, which has, as it were, been threshed and fiercely trodden upon the threshing floor by Babylon.

This passage is of great importance, as giving us a rare and welcome glimpse into the phenomenon of ecstasy. The seer wins his vision of what is happening in distant Babylon through a sort of second sight. He has, as it were, two personalities, the normal and the ecstatic: the latter "spies" the vision and brings back word to the former.

The Fall of Babylon: its Consequences for the Trading Tribes of the Desert (21:13–17)

11. The [1] burden of Dumah.
One calleth unto me out of Seir,
"Watchman, [2] what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?"
12. The watchman said,
"The morning cometh,
And also the night:
If ye will inquire, inquire ye:
[3] Turn ye, come."

13. The [4] burden upon Arabia.
In the forest [5] in Arabia shall ye lodge,
O ye travelling companies of Dedanites.

[1] m. *oracle concerning.* [2] m. *what* hour. [3] m. *come ye again.* [4] m. *oracle.*
[5] Gr. Tar. Syr. Vg. *in the evening.*

11. For **the burden of Dumah** read perhaps *Oracle on Edom.* This oracle probably comes from the same seer as the last; it makes a similar distinction between the ecstatic personality, here called **the watchman**, vs. 12 (=*spy*, vs. 6; different Hebrew words), and the normal personality (*me*, vs. 11). As the question comes from *Seir*, *i.e.*, Edom, probably *Edom* should be read for **Dumah**. The question is, "How late is it in the night?" *i.e.* How far is the night spent — the night, which enwrapped Edom, as all western Asia, of subjection to the Babylonians?

12. The seer has as yet no clear answer to offer. The morning of freedom which has dawned for Edom with the fall of Babylon may be followed by another night, through the rise of Persia — he is not sure; and in his uncertainty, he bids his questioner consult him again later, when perhaps his vision will be clearer.

13. For **the burden upon Arabia** read *oracle "in the steppe."* The phrase *in the steppe*, like the superscription in vs. 1, is taken from the opening words of the oracle. The caravans of the **Dedanites**, a trading tribe of northwestern Arabia, will, in the insecurity attending the fall of Babylon (cf 13:14 f.), be exposed

14. Unto him that [1] was thirsty
They brought water;
[2] The inhabitants of the land of Tema
Did meet the fugitives with their bread.
15. For they fled away from the swords,
From the drawn sword,
And from the bent bow,
And from the grievousness of war.
16. For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Within a
year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the
17. glory of Kedar shall fail: and the residue of the number of the archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be few: for the LORD, the God of Israel, hath spoken it.

JUDAH'S UNPARDONABLE SIN (22: 1–14)

22. The [3] burden of the valley of [4] vision.
What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly

[1] m. *is thirsty, bring ye.* [2] Gr. Tar. Syr. Vg. *ye inhabitants . . . meet.* [3] m. *oracle concerning.* [4] Gr. *Zion.*

to assault, for safety's sake they will have to leave the caravan routes, and *lodge in the bush, in the steppe* or wilderness (as we should translate, instead of **in Arabia**).

14, 15. The people of the tribe of **Tema** (south of the Dedanites) are urged to *bring water to meet the thirsty caravans*, and to *offer to the fugitives the bread they need* (imperative; so the Greek version); they have fled to escape an attack. Read "the *whetted* sword."

16, 17. These vss. forcibly recall 16: 13 f. **Kedar** appears here to be a general designation for the north Arabian tribes, who were skilled in the use of the *bow* (cf. Gen. 21: 20).

22: 1–14. This very striking oracle, though appearing in the foreign group (Chaps. 13–27), has to do with Jerusalem. Before her people, who are for the moment in a tumult of joy, Isaiah appears with sorrow in his heart and on his face, and solemnly announces a coming day of doom for their incurable impenitence

Gone up to the housetops?
2. O thou that art full of shoutings, a tumultuous city,
A joyous town;
Thy slain are not slain with the sword,
Neither are they dead in battle.
3. All thy rulers fled away together,
They were bound [1] by the archers:
All that were found of thee were bound together,
They fled afar off.
4. Therefore said I, "Look away from me,

[1] m. *without the bow*; Gr. *cruelly*.

and frivolity. The occasion was probably the departure of the Assyrians from Jerusalem — a departure which Hezekiah had purchased from Sennacherib, who was blockading Jerusalem after having already captured forty-six cities of Judah, by the payment of a very heavy tribute (cf. 2 Kings 18:13-16). From the roofs of their houses (vs. 1) the people are gleefully watching the departing foe, and celebrating their ignominious deliverance with riotous merriment (vs. 13), when Isaiah hurls among them his terrible threat of doom (vs. 14).

The Prophet's Vision of Doom (vss. 1–5)

1. **Oracle on the Valley of Vision** — a title suggested by vs. 5. Clearly one of the valleys near Jerusalem is meant (Gr. reads *valley of Zion*) — perhaps once the site of an ancient oracle. The reading "Valley *of Hinnom*" has been suggested.

2 f. Isaiah is astonished and vexed at the tumultuous joy of the people, who are assembled on the flat roofs of their houses; and in vision he sees another day, when the city will be taken, "the defenceless citizens cut down, and the magnates, who have vainly sought to flee (cf. 2 Kings 25:4–7) are captured" (Cheyne). They die, not in battle, but by the hand of the executioner. Perhaps the verse should read somewhat as follows:

All thy captains are fled,
They that wielded the bow,
All thy strong men are taken,
Though they fled far away.

4, 5. Isaiah's gaze is on the terrible day that is coming (vs. 5), the thought of which throws him into bitter and inconsolable

I will weep bitterly;
Labour not to comfort me
For the spoiling of the daughter of my people.
5. For it is a day of discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity,
From the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
In the valley of vision; a breaking down of the walls,
And a crying to the mountains.
6. And Elam bare the quiver,
With chariots of men, and horsemen;
And Kir uncovered the shield.
7. And it came to pass that thy choicest valleys were full of chariots,
And the horsemen set themselves in array at the gate.
8. And he took away the covering of Judah;
And thou didst look in that day to the armour in the house of the forest.
9. And ye saw the breaches in the city of David, that they were many: and ye gathered together the

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sorrow. He hears in imagination the enemy's wild war-cry resounding **to the mountains**.

The Siege of Jerusalem (vss. 6–11)

In this passage, Isaiah looks back to the blockade which has just been raised, and to the city's preparations to meet it.

6, 7. **Elam** and **Kir** are contingents of the Assyrian army. Elam bore the quiver *on chariots with horses*, and Kir **uncovered the shield**, *i.e.* from its leathern case. In vs. 7, omit *it came to pass that*.

8. The first clause, which is very obscure, may refer to Sennacherib's capture of the other cities of Judah, whose defensive **covering** was *removed* by their capture. **The house of the forest**, *i.e.* of Lebanon (1 Kings 7:2 f.), so-called from its cedar pillars, formed part of the palace at Jerusalem, and served in part the purpose of an armory (1 Kings 10:17).

9–11. It is generally agreed that the details of the defence

10. waters of the lower pool. And ye numbered
the houses of Jerusalem, and ye brake down
11. the houses to fortify the wall. Ye made also
a reservoir between the two walls for the water
of the old pool:

But ye looked not unto him that had done this,
Neither had ye respect unto him that fashioned it
long ago.

12. And in that day did the Lord, the LORD of hosts, call,
To weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and
to girding with sackcloth:
13. And behold, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating flesh and drinking wine:
"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die."

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measures in vss. 9b–11a are not from the hand of Isaiah, though they must have been added by some one familiar with Hezekiah's arrangements (cf. 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chr. 32:2–5). The water supply of Jerusalem was poor, and the prospect of a siege made this defect felt with double keenness (cf. Isa. 7:3). The material of the demolished houses was used to strengthen the wall. Vs. 11b, read after 9a, is very striking:

Ye looked to the armor in the House of the Forest,
And ye saw that the breaches in David's city were many:
But ye did not look to him who was doing all this,
And him who fashioned it long ago, ye saw not.

The **look** and **see** of the first couplet, repeated as they are in the second, make a very effective contrast. The people have eyes for the material, but none for the spiritual; they depend upon their armor, and forget their God — rely upon their own prudent measures and material resources, and ignore the greatest Factor of all, the Lord of history, who, through all that happens, is working out his eternal purpose. This is the sublimest of all follies.

12 f. The desperate experience through which the people had just passed was in reality — had they had the eyes to *see* it (vs. 11) — a divine call to humiliation; the customs alluded to are mourning customs (cf. 15:2 f.). Instead of this, however, the people,

14. And [1] the LORD of hosts revealed himself in mine ear,
Surely this iniquity shall not be [2] purged from you till ye die,
[3] Saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

PERSONAL THREATS AND PROMISES (22 : 15–25)

The Doom of Shebna (22 : 15–18)

15. Thus saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
"Go, get thee unto this [4] treasurer, even unto Shebna,
which is over the house, *and say*,

[1] Gr. *these things have been revealed in the ears of the Lord of hosts.* [2] m. *expiated by.* [3] Gr. om. this line. [4] m. *steward.*

with their incurable frivolity, abandoned themselves to revelry and met with scorn the prophet's solemn words of warning — "**let us eat and drink**, if **tomorrow**, as you say, **we** are to **die**."

14. "You *shall* die," retorts the prophet. Their levity is unpardonable, it must be punished with death; and this awful threat of doom is a direct *revelation*, whispered as it were into Isaiah's ear by God himself.

Even for Isaiah, this is a remarkably graphic and powerful passage; the city blockaded by foreign soldiery, the desperate measures of defence in which everything was remembered but God; and then — after peace has been purchased by a heavy bribe — the roofs crowded with tumultuous merry-makers, and the prophet with his sorrowful face and his eyes fixed upon a coming day of doom. The unpardonable sin of Jerusalem was frivolity — that shallow temper which no humiliation could sober.

22 : 15–25. A high official, named Shebna, apparently a foreigner, is threatened by Isaiah with the doom of exile (vss. 15–18). This threat is followed by a promise of unique authority to be conferred upon Eliakim (vss. 19–23), — a promise to which is appended a forecast of the ruin of his family (vss. 24 f.).

15 f. For **Even unto Shebna, which is over the house**, read *Against Shebna, the governor of the palace.* This is no doubt the title of the oracle, accidentally transposed to the end of the vs. Shebna is contemptuously called *that official* (*steward*, cf. margin, rather than **treasurer**). Isaiah's stern words have suggested to

16. 'What doest thou here? and whom hast thou here,
That thou hast hewed thee out here a sepulchre?'
Hewing him out a sepulchre on high,
Graving an habitation for himself in the rock!
17. Behold, the LORD will hurl thee violently away
[1] As a *strong* man; yea, he will wrap thee up closely.
18. He will surely [2] turn and toss thee
Like a ball into a large country;
There shalt thou die, and there shall be the chariots of thy glory,
Thou shame of thy lord's house.

The Exaltation of Eliakim (22:19–23)

19. And I will thrust thee from thine office,
And from thy station shall [3] he pull thee down.
20. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah:

[1] m. *O thou strong man, he will lay fast hold on thee.* [2] m. *wind thee round and round like a ball* and toss thee. [3] Syr. Vg. *I.*

some that Shebna championed the policy of an Egyptian alliance, denounced by the prophet (31:1 ff.). In any case, Isaiah was provoked, partly by the sight of his splendid chariots, but much more by his pride in preparing for himself a sepulchre **here on high**, in some conspicuous place on Zion, probably among the sepulchres of the nobility — he, a foreigner, who had no right and no kindred in Jerusalem.

17 f. His fate will be exile — to be taken like a **ball**, and **hurled** into the *broad land* of Assyria, there to die.

19. Exile involved, of course, deposition from office. Read "*I* will pull thee down."

20–22. The change of officials no doubt implied a change of policy. Eliakim is spoken of in enthusiastic terms as Jehovah's **servant** (like Isaiah himself, 20:3), and **father** (like Joseph, Gen. 45:8), *i.e.* beneficent ruler, of the people. He will wear the official

21. And I will clothe him with thy robe,
And strengthen him with thy girdle,
And I will commit thy government into his hand:
And he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
22. And the key of the house of David
Will I lay upon his shoulder;
Rev. 3:7 And he shall open, and none shall shut;
And he shall shut, and none shall open.
23. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place;
And he shall be for a throne of glory to his father's house.

The Downfall of Eliakim's Family (22: 24 f.)

24. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, [1] the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the vessels of cups even to all the

[1] For the rest of the vs. Gr. reads simply *small and great.*

robe and **girdle**. Over his shoulder is laid the large Oriental key, which, with its power to open or close, is a fit symbol of absolute authority (cf. 9:6; Mat. 16:19). In 36:3; 37:2, Eliakim is mentioned as governor of the palace, and as taking precedence of Shebna.

23. The firmly driven **nail** or tent-peg implies the permanence of his position, in contrast to Shebna (cf. Ezr. 9:8); and through him his family would reach posts of honor.

24 f. Rather to our surprise, these verses predict ruin for the family so generously spoken of in vs. 23. They will hang upon the *nail* (cf. vs. 23) — like vessels (**cups** or *bowls* and *pitchers* they are contemptuously called) on a kitchen wall — and when the nail gives way, down they will come with a crash.

These verses, which contradict the spirit of the last oracle, were apparently added later by some one hostile to Eliakim's family.

Chap. 23. This oracle concludes the series upon the foreign nations. As a sailor people, whose ships were upon every known sea, the Phœnicians occupied a conspicuous place as the middlemen of the ancient world. This poem, which describes Phœnicia's

25. vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that was fastened in a sure place give way; and it shall be hewn down, and fall, and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off; for the LORD hath spoken it.

THE FATE OF PHŒNICIA (Chap. 23)

The Elegy (23:1–14)

23. The [1] burden of Tyre.
Howl, ye ships of [2] Tarshish; for it is laid waste,
[3] So that there is no house, no entering in:

[1] m. *oracle concerning.* [2] Gr. *Carthage.* [3] Gr. om.

fall, gives a vivid picture of her commerce, her power, and her pride. She is the incarnation of the purely commercial spirit, untouched and unrestrained by religion, and naturally therefore falls under the prophetic condemnation. The closing verses (15–18) look out upon a time in which the gains from Tyrian commerce will be made contributory to the welfare of Jerusalem.

23:1–14. In form this is an elegy — rather than a prophecy — upon the fall of Sidon (vss. 2, 4, 12), or it may be Tyre (vs. 8). More than once in Isaiah's time was Phœnicia ravaged by the Assyrians, and the elegy may be his; it has also been referred, however, to Nebuchadrezzar's siege of Tyre (586–573 B.C., cf. Ezek. 26–28), and even to the destruction of Sidon by the Persians in 348 B. C. Whatever be its origin, the poem is a striking description of the fall of a great naval power.

The Call to Lament (vss. 1–5)

1–3. **Ships of Tarshish**, cf. 2:16. For several reasons, the following verses seem to need slight emendation. Read perhaps: *for your haven* (or *stronghold*) *is laid waste: on the way back* (to Phœnicia) *from the land of Chittim* (*i.e.* Cyprus) it (*i.e.* the news of the destruction) *has been revealed to them*, perhaps by ships which they met on the way. *Perished are the inhabitants of the coast-land, the merchants of Sidon, who crossed the sea, whose messengers were upon many waters* (cf. Ps. 107:23), *whose harvest was the seed* (*i.e.* wheat) *of Shihor* (*i.e.* the Nile; Jer. 2:18), *and whose revenue*

From the land of Kittim
It is revealed unto them.
2. Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle;
Thou whom the merchants of Zidon,
That pass over the sea, have replenished.
3. And on great waters the seed of Shihor,
The harvest [1] of the Nile, was her revenue;
And she was the mart of nations.
4. Be ashamed, O Zidon; for the sea hath spoken, the stronghold of the sea, saying,
"I have not travailed, nor brought forth,
Neither have I nourished young men,
Nor brought up virgins."

5. When the report cometh to Egypt, they shall be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.
6. Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl,
Ye inhabitants of the isle.
7. Is this your joyous *city*,
Whose antiquity is of ancient days,
Whose feet carried her
Afar off to sojourn?

[1] Gr. om.

was the traffic of nations. The world's commerce was carried on Phœnician ships.

4 f. Vs. 4 (omit *the stronghold of the sea*) finely pictures the sea as a childless mother (cf. 1 : 2) now that Phœnicia is ruined, and her sons sail the seas no more. Vs. 5, perhaps late, represents Egypt as terrified by the fall of Tyre — her turn is coming next.

The Call to Flight (vss. 6–9)

6 f. The Phœnicians are urged to flee to **Tarshish**, a colony of theirs in Spain, now that their happy ancient city is ruined, the city whose merchants were wont to **sojourn**, *i.e. settle*, in distant lands.

8. Who hath purposed this
Against Tyre, the crowning *city*,
Whose merchants are princes, Rev. 18:23
Whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?
9. The LORD of hosts both purposed it,
To stain the pride of all glory,
To bring into contempt
All the honourable of the earth.

10. [1] Pass through thy land [2] as the Nile, O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no girdle *about thee* any more.
11. He hath stretched out his hand over the sea,
He hath shaken the kingdoms;
The LORD hath given commandment concerning Canaan,
To destroy the strongholds thereof.
12. And he said, "Thou shalt no more rejoice,
O thou oppressed virgin daughter of [3] Zidon:
Arise, pass over to Kittim;
Even there shalt thou have no rest.

[1] Gr. *cultivate.* [2] Gr. om. [3] Some MSS. read *Zion.*

8 f. The ruin of Phœnicia is in accordance with the **purpose** of Jehovah, to whom pride is detestable. Tyre is *the bestower of crowns* (so SV), appointing petty kings in her subject colonies; or perhaps the word means *the crowned (queen)*.

The Ruin of Phœnicia (vss. 10–14)

10. For this verse, whose opening words are obscure, and perhaps but repeat, with modification, the closing words of vs. 9, Duhm cleverly suggests: *Weep, ye ships of Tarshish* (cf. vs. 14): *no harbor have ye any more.*

11 f. **He**, *i.e.* Jehovah (cf. vs. 9). **Canaan**, *i.e.* Phœnicia. Even if she fled to her own colonies, **Kittim**, *i.e.* Cyprus, she would find no rest.

13. Behold, the land of the Chaldeans; this people is
no more; the Assyrian hath appointed it for the
beasts of the wilderness: they set up their towers,
they overthrew the palaces thereof;
He made it a ruin.
14. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish:
For your stronghold is laid waste.

The Revival of Tyre (23 : 15–18)

15. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years it shall be unto Tyre as in the song of the harlot:

16. Take an harp,
Go about the city,
Thou harlot that hast been forgotten;

Make sweet melody,
Sing many songs,
That thou mayest be remembered.

13. Of this desperate verse, Duhm's explanation seems best — that it originally ran: *Behold the land of Kittim* (*i.e.* Cyprus, the land to which they flee), *he* (*i.e.* Jehovah) *has made it a ruin* — the intervening words being a gloss to be rendered as follows: *this is the people that* (in Hebrew the word *which* is very like the word for *Assyrian*) *was founded by the seafarers, they erected its watchtowers, cities, and palaces.*

14. The elegy ends as it began.

15. **Seventy years**, a round number, suggested by Jer. 25 : 11. **One king**, *i.e.* one dynasty (Exod. 1 : 8). Tyre shall fare as the harlot in the song.

16. The song is thus happily rendered by G. H. Box:

Seize lyre — walk up and down the street,
O Harlot, by the world forgot!
Twang well — sing many a ditty sweet
To win a last forget-me-not!

17. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall return to her hire, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. Rev. 17:2
18. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

17 f. The metaphor of vss. 15 f. is maintained — Tyre's commerce is described as *intercourse* with the nations; and the proceeds of it, unlike those of the women dedicated to immorality (Deut. 23:18), are to be consecrated to Jehovah — in other words, are to be devoted to supplying the needs of the Jews, those who **dwell before Jehovah**, securing for them ample food and stately clothing (cf. 60:11). This view of the heathen as the slaves of the Jews is characteristic of post-exilic Judaism (61:5).

THE GREAT WORLD JUDGMENT (Chaps. 24–27)

THE JUDGMENT: THE REBELS PUNISHED (Chap. 24)

24:1 **24.** Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh
it waste,
And turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad
the inhabitants thereof.

Chaps. 24–27. These four remarkable chapters are unique in the Old Testament. Roughly speaking they are a prophetic, or rather apocalyptic, description — interrupted by a few songs of praise — of the great impending day of Jehovah, when the world will be convulsed, but the Jews will be saved and gathered to Zion. The songs (25:1–5; 25:9–11; 26:1–19; 27:2–6; 27:7–11) chiefly celebrate the overthrow of some important city (cf. 25:2; 26:5) or describe the care with which Jehovah watches over Israel (27:2). When these lyrics are removed, there is a more or less continuous prophecy, which runs briefly thus: The world is about to be convulsed by reason of the heavy load of sin that lies upon it: in that day Jehovah will punish the rebellious powers in earth and heaven and assume sovereignty himself on Zion (Chap. 24), where for the sorrowing nations a royal banquet will be spread (25:6–8). In the judgment, Jehovah's own people will be preserved (26:20–27:1) and at the sound of the trumpet they shall come from the ends of the earth and worship their God on Zion (27:12 f.).

The whole tone of the prophecy and the reference to a resurrection in 26:19 point to a date long after the age of Isaiah. Doubtless the picture of the world reeling and convulsed in judgment was suggested by some definite historical situation, when gloom and confusion reigned. The allusions are too veiled to enable us to date the prophecy, but it has been placed with much probability about the time of the dissolution of the Persian empire, and the conquests of Alexander the Great (*circa* 334 B.C.), to whose victories the songs of rejoicing in 24:14–16 have been supposed to refer.

2. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;
   As with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress;
   As with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower;
   As with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.
3. The earth shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled;
   For the LORD hath spoken this word.

4. The earth mourneth and fadeth away,
   The world languisheth and fadeth away,
   The lofty people of the earth do languish.
5. The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof;
   Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance,

Chap. 24. In a series of powerful pictures, this poem describes the judgment upon the wicked world. The moral order has been grievously violated, and the end cannot be far off (*behold!* vs. 1). It will come with accompaniments of violence and terror, and the very earth itself will reel and rock. All the powers natural and supernatural, upon the earth and above the earth, will be laid prostrate; and the glorious Jehovah, who will then be all in all, will set up his everlasting throne in Zion.

The Overturning of the World (vss. 1–13)

1, 2. **Behold**! This **turning** of the world **upside down** is expected soon; it will take the form of social anarchy (vs. 2), and the convulsion of physical nature (18b–20). Society (cf. 3:1–7) and nature will be reduced to chaos.

3. The confusion will be effected in part by a plundering army, in accordance with some such prophecy as Ezek. 38 f.

4–12. These verses, though they describe the future, no doubt reflect the weary and gloomy mood of the contemporary world.

4. The last clause should probably read: *the heaven* (lit. *the height*, cf. vs. 21), *together with the earth languishes*.

5. **The earth is polluted**, etc. The power of human sin to infect and transform even nature itself is here strikingly suggested (cf. vs. 20). The sin is a breach of the universal moral **laws**, espe-

Broken the everlasting covenant.
6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
And they that dwell therein are found guilty:
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth [1] are burned,
And few men left.
7. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth,
All the merry-hearted do sigh.
8. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth,
The noise of them that rejoice endeth,
The joy of the harp ceaseth.
9. They shall not drink wine [2] with a song;
Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.
10. The city of [3] confusion is broken down:
11. Every house is shut up, that no man may come in.
There is a crying in the streets because of the wine;
All joy is darkened,
The mirth of the land is [4] gone.
12. In the city is left desolation,
And the gate is smitten with destruction.
13. For thus shall it be in the midst of the earth
Among the people, as the shaking of an olive tree,
As the grape gleanings when the vintage is done.

[1] Gr. *shall be poor.* [2] Gr. *they are ashamed.* [3] Heb. *chaos;* Gr. *every city.* [4] Heb. *gone into captivity.*

cially of the law against murder (cf. 26:21), which appears to be specially in view in the reference to **the everlasting covenant** (cf. Gen. 9:6, 16).

6. **Therefore**: sin brings a **curse**. **Are burned**, parched with drought or fever.

7–9. In the sorrowful days to come, there would be no more happy **wine**-drinking to the accompaniment of music and **song**.

10–12. The traits of this description seem to be drawn from an existing situation. The **city of chaos** (Gen. 1:2) is apparently Jerusalem. The houses are shut for very fear, joy is **darkened** or *gone*, gladness *is banished*, the gates are battered *to ruins*.

14. These shall lift up their voice, [1] they shall shout;
For the majesty of the LORD they cry aloud from the sea.
15. "Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the [2] east,
Even the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea."
16. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, "Glory to the righteous."

But I said, [3] "I pine away, I pine away, woe is me!
The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."
17. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

[1] Gr. *those that are left behind upon the earth shall rejoice together in the glory of the Lord; the water of the sea shall be troubled.* [2] Heb. *lights;* Gr. om. [3] Heb. *leanness to me.*

13. The judgment will be so very thorough that but few will survive (vs. 6: cf. 17: 6).

A Significant Event (vss. 14–18a)

14. Something has just happened — whether Alexander's crossing of the Hellespont or something else — which seems to **these**, *i.e.* the Jews dwelling in the west (Asia Minor? lit. **the sea**), to illustrate **the majesty of Jehovah** and to call for devout gratitude, though the poet takes a very different view (16b).

15, 16a. This is what they shout. They call upon their brethren **in the east** (lit. in the *lights*, *i.e.* perhaps the regions of light; the phrase is obscure) to **glorify Jehovah**; and to the east, not only do the western **isles** respond, but from the distant *fringe* of the earth (Ethiopia?) are borne the strains of the song, "Glory is come for the righteous," *i.e.* for Israel.

16b–18a. This hopeful outlook, however, the poet cannot share. He can only see in the movement the advance of robbers, who will plunge the whole world into irretrievable misery (cf. Amos 5: 18–20).

18. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the
noise of the fear shall fall into the pit;
And he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall
be taken in the snare:
For the windows on high are opened,
And the foundations of the earth do shake.
19. The earth is utterly broken,
The earth is clean dissolved,
The earth is moved exceedingly.
20. The earth shall stagger like a drunken man,
And shall be moved to and fro like a hut;
And the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it,
And it shall fall, and not rise again.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones
on high,
And the kings of the earth upon the earth.
22. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are
gathered in the pit,
And shall be shut up in the prison,

18b–20. Here follows a passage of extraordinary power. The terrors of the ancient Flood return (Gen. 7:11). As if in the grasp of Titanic powers, the earth splits and breaks, reels and rocks, like a *hammock*, or watchman's **hut** (1:8); and the supreme ethical passion of the poet is shown in this that, for him, the ultimate reason for this awful elemental confusion is a moral one — the heavy burden of guilt that rests upon the earth; and its doom is to be irretrievable, like that which long ago Amos (5:2) had announced for Israel.

21 f. The judgment is all-embracing, it will fall upon celestial no less than upon terrestrial powers. **The host of the height**, *i.e.*, of heaven, whether identified with or in some way related to the stars, are probably the patron angels of the nations of the world, and appropriately involved in their doom. Their special fate is to be *swept like prisoners into a* subterranean *pit* (as described in the

And after many days shall they be visited.

23. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed;
For the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
And [1] before his ancients gloriously.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF SOME PROUD CITY (25:1–5)

25. O LORD, thou art my God;
I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name;
For thou hast done wonderful things,
Even counsels of old, in faithfulness and truth.

[1] m. *before his elders* there shall be *glory*.

apocalyptic book of Enoch, Chaps. 18, 21), where, after long confinement, they will be visited with final and irrevocable punishment.

23. For Israel, however, the end will not be chaos and darkness, but order and light. There will be no need of sun or moon, for the glorious Jehovah will be both light and *king*, and mount Zion will be his throne; there the elders of Israel would behold his glory (cf. 4:5 f.) as of old the elders on Sinai (Exod. 24:9–11). Thus the gloom and confusions of the chapter end in a vision of hope, which recalls the blessed days of Israel's olden time.

25:1–5. This passage is not the continuation of the last. It is a lyrical poem in the style of the Psalms, celebrating with devout gratitude the fall of some strong, proud city — whether Babylon in the sixth century B.C., or Samaria, towards the close of the second, or more probably Tyre, which was destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. The objection that the fall of Tyre could not have been the occasion of such rejoicing on the part of the Jews is hardly valid when we consider that this had more than once been the theme of Hebrew prophecy (Ezek. 26; cf. Is. 23, etc.)

1. *For Thou hast accomplished marvellous purposes*
That of old were faithful and sure.

The idea is that the purpose — the destruction of this city, as announced in ancient prophecy (*e.g.* Ezek. 26) — was wonder-

2. For thou hast made of a city an heap;
Of a defenced city a ruin:
A palace of [1] strangers to be no city;
It shall never be built.

3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee,
The city of the terrible nations shall fear thee.
4. For thou hast been a stronghold to the poor,
A stronghold to the needy in his distress.

A refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat,
when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm
5. against the wall. [2] As the heat in a dry place
Shalt thou bring down the noise of strangers; as the
heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the
terrible ones shall be brought low.

[1] Gr. *ungodly* (insolent). [2] Gr. *as fainthearted men thirsting in Zion by reason of ungodly men to whom thou didst deliver us.*

ful, almost incredible; nevertheless the announcement was true, and has now been fulfilled.

2. Of **strangers** — perhaps, of *the insolent.*

3. The fall of this proud city leads even the heathen **nations,** and not the Jews only, to acknowledge Jehovah and his might. If the poem belong to the second century B.C., the **city** would probably be Rome; if, however, it belong to the fourth century, the word *city* — as no single city seems to fit the allusion —may be interpreted collectively (cities).

4 f. The **poor** and **needy** are the Jews. The last clause of vs. 4 (" for the blast of the terrible ones is as a rainstorm *in winter* " — rather than **against the wall**), and the whole of vs. 5 except " Thou dost lay low *the pride of the insolent* " (rather than **the noise of strangers** — by two very simple changes in the text) are probably glosses. The verses would then run:

For Thou hast been a stronghold to the weak,
A stronghold to the poor in his distress,
A refuge from the rainstorm, a shadow from the heat,
The pride of insolence thou layest low.

THE BANQUET OF THE NATIONS ON MOUNT ZION (25 : 6–8)

6. And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts
Make unto all peoples
A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.
7. [1] And he will [2] destroy in this mountain
The face of the covering that is cast over all peoples,
And the veil that is spread over all nations.
8. [3] He hath swallowed up death for ever; 1 Cor. 15 : 54

[1] Gr. *they shall anoint themselves with myrrh upon this mountain.* [2] Heb. *swallow up.* [3] Gr. *death hath prevailed and swallowed up.* Theodotion, 1 Cor. 15 : 54, *death has been swallowed up into victory.*

25 : 6–8. This passage, different in theme and spirit from the last, is in reality the continuation of 24 : 23. It is *on this mountain*, *i.e.* mount Zion, where Jehovah of Hosts is King (24 : 23), that the banquet of the nations takes place. This beautiful image symbolizes their reception into the kingdom of God (cf. Mat. 8 : 11, Luke 14 : 21–24), and the gladness of the scene forms an admirable counterpart to the gloom and joylessness of 24 : 7–9.

6. Not only, as in ancient days, for the nobles of *Israel* (Exod. 24 : 11), but for **all peoples**, Jehovah makes a feast. Ordinarily it was the worshippers who feasted the god, here it is God himself who is the host. And the feast is of the finest — **fat things** (the fat parts were supposed to be best and therefore customarily offered to the god) and wine that had been long settled on the **lees**, and had therefore acquired a powerful flavor. Before drinking, it was **well refined**, *i.e. strained.*

7. The veil is the veil of sorrow, graphically described in 24 : 7–12. The covered head was a sign of mourning (2 Sam. 15 : 30). **All the nations** share in the banquet, for *all* had known the sorrow.

8. When the veil is removed, tears are seen upon the sorrowful faces; but these are wiped away by divine hands, the hands of the *King* (24 : 23) — wiped from *all* faces. As for **his people**, the Jews, they are scattered over **all the earth**, reproached and detested; but this **reproach** and hostility will be removed, for *there is a divine promise to that effect.* The phrase **He hath swallowed up death for**

Rev. 7:17; 21:4

And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces;
And the reproach of his people shall he take away from off all the earth:
For the Lord hath spoken it.

Song over the Anticipated Destruction of Moab (25:9–12)

9. And it shall be said in that day,
Lo, this is our God;
We have waited for him,
And he will save us: [1] this is the Lord; we have waited for him,
We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

[1] Some Gr. MSS. om. this clause and next.

ever (quoted by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:54), coming between the *veil* and the *tears* which are visible on its removal, appears to be an intrusion, though not an inappropriate one, as it is in general harmony with the spirit of the context. That great "last enemy" (1 Cor. 15:26), cause of so many tears, will also be annihilated in the coming kingdom — its citizens will be immortal.

This scene is one of the most daring and beautiful in the Old Testament. It is at once infinitely tender and splendidly generous. It shows us a sorrowful world in which tears stand upon every face; but Jehovah with his own hands dries the tears, and spreads his table upon Mount Zion not for his own people only, but for all peoples, and gives his motley company of guests of his finest and best. It is a beautiful picture of the kingdom of God as a redemption from sorrow and a fountain of satisfaction, and it is instinct with a sense of the infinite pity and the all-embracing hospitality of Jehovah of Hosts.

25:9–12. These verses, with their unconcealed hatred of Moab, do not breathe the generous atmosphere of the last section, and are doubtless from a different hand. Some historical incident must have given the impulse to this impetuous outburst, but we do not know what it was.

9. A proud and grateful recognition of Jehovah's power. Apparently the middle clause has been inadvertently repeated;

10. For in this mountain
Shall the hand of the LORD rest,
And Moab shall be trodden down in his place,
[1] Even as straw is trodden down [2] in the water of the dunghill.

11. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst thereof,
As he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to swim:
And he shall lay low his pride
Together with the craft of his hands.
12. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath he brought down, laid low,
And brought to the ground, even to the dust.

[1] Gr. *as they tread the threshingfloor in waggons.* [2] Or *in the dunghill.*

it is absent from some of the Greek MSS. The verse would then run:

Lo! Here is our God,
On whom we have hoped
That he should deliver us.
Let us rejoice and be glad in his deliverance.

10. Jehovah's hand would graciously rest **in this mountain**, *i.e.* in Zion, for that is the capital of his kingdom (24: 23; 25: 6) — but Moab would be crushed by it. For a similarly vigorous and contemptuous reference to Moab, cf. Ps. 60: 8. The word for straw (*mathbēn*) is probably intended to suggest an allusion to the Moab town of *Madhmen* (Jer. 48: 2).

11. "And *when* he (Moab) spreads forth his hands . . . he (Jehovah) will lay low his pride." Moab's blustering efforts to swim in the water of the dungpit would be effectively frustrated; down he would be thrust, *despite* (rather than **together with**) the craft of his hands.

12. This verse, hardly relevant here, appears to be a variant to 26: 5.

Song of Gratitude and Hope (26: 1–19)

Jerusalem Secure: The Proud City Destroyed (26: 1–6)

26. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of
Judah:
We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint
For walls and bulwarks.
2. Open ye the gates, [1] that the righteous nation which
keepeth truth
May enter therein.
3. [2] Thou wilt keep him in [3] perfect peace, *whose* mind is
stayed *on thee:*
Because he trusteth in thee.
4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for [4] in [5] the Lord
Jehovah

[1] Gr. reads vss. 2b–4 thus: *let the nation enter that keepeth righteousness and keepeth truth, that layeth hold of truth and keepeth peace; for in thee, O Lord, they have assuredly trusted forever, the great, the eternal God.* [2] m. *A stedfast mind thou keepest in perfect peace, because it, etc.* [3] Heb. *peace, peace.* [4] Gr. om. *in the Lord.* [5] Heb. *Jah Jehovah.*

26: 1–9. More moods than one are reflected in this carefully constructed poem. The opening stanza (vss. 1–6) is a song of praise for the safety of Jerusalem and the destruction of some unnamed lofty city. This leads in the next stanza (vss. 7–10) to a meditation on the ways of God, which, in the third (vss. 11–14) and fourth (vss. 15–19), issues in a daring outlook — not unmindful of the pathos of the past — upon the coming Day, when Israel's dead would be raised again to share the national glory.

Here again the historical situation is very hard to reconstruct; but the city whose destruction is celebrated is possibly Samaria, probably Tyre (cf. 25: 1–5).

1, 2. **In that day . . . Judah**: a later introduction to the poem. *That day* is the glorious day to come (24: 21–23).

The **strong city** is Jerusalem, which now appears to have **walls.** *Walls and bulwarks he appoints for her safety.* The **gates** may have just been dedicated, and the **righteous** who pass through them are the Jews.

3. *The steadfast mind, i.e.* him who is steadily faithful, *thou dost keep in good fortune:* **peace**, *i.e.* welfare, prosperity, is the reward of faith and fidelity.

4, 5. Jehovah is worthy of all confidence; for he is a **rock of**

Is [1] an everlasting rock.
5. For he hath brought down them that dwell on high,
The lofty city:
He layeth it low, he layeth it low even to the ground;
He bringeth it even to the dust.
6. [2] The foot shall tread it down; even the feet of the poor,
And the steps of the needy.

It is Well with the Righteous, Ill with the persistently Wicked
(26:7–10)

7. The way of the just is [3] uprightness:
[4] Thou that art upright dost [5] direct the path of the just.
8. Yea, in the way of thy judgements,
O LORD, we have waited for thee;
To thy name and to thy memorial
Is the desire of our soul.
9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me
Will I seek thee [6] early;

[1] Heb. *a rock of ages.* [2] Gr. om. *the foot.* [3] m. *a right way: the path of the just thou directest aright.* [4] Gr. om. *thou that art upright.* [5] m. *level.* [6] m. *diligently.*

ages, as is proved by his power to lay the lofty city (Tyre: or Samaria?) level with the dust.

6. There is the same wild joy at the thought of trampling the enemy down as in Mal. 4:3.

7. In the spirit of Psalm 1, this vs. asserts the good fortune of the good. *The path of the righteous is straight, thou smoothest the way of the righteous.* This truth had just been illustrated in the experience of the Jews (vss. 1–6).

8, 9. Jehovah's way is a way of **judgment**, it is by this that he brings the disobedient to their senses. Israel's patient waiting for the divine judgment has already been in part rewarded, but she still longingly awaits some more signal **memorial** or manifestation of Jehovah's **name** or character.

For when thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world
Learn righteousness.
10. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness;
In the land of uprightness
Will he deal wrongfully, and will not behold
The majesty of the LORD.

The Utter Destruction of the Enemy (26: 11–14)

11. LORD, thy hand is lifted up, yet they see it not:
But they shall see
Thy zeal for the people, and be ashamed;
Yea, [1] fire shall devour thine adversaries.
12. LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou hast also wrought
All our works for us.
13. O LORD our God, [2] other lords beside thee
Have had dominion over us;
But by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

[1] m. *the fire of* (*i.e.* kindled against) *thine adversaries shall devour them.* [2] Gr. *take possession of us. O Lord, besides thee we know no other: we name thy name.*

10. A very slight and reasonable addition of Marti's to the text gives the following excellent sense: *No favor will be shown to the wicked who has not learned righteousness.* The **land of uprightness** is Judah, and despite what has happened there (vs. 1) the wicked *have no eyes for the majesty of Jehovah*, but even there go on their perverse way.

11. It is a familiar Old Testament thought that the bad are blind, stupid; though the divine **hand** has been so powerfully **lifted up** in recent history (vs. 5), they do not **see it**. Hence the prayer: *Let them see it and be ashamed, let Thy zeal for Thy people, and the fire ordained for Thine adversaries devour them.*

12. Fire for them, but **peace**, *i.e. prosperity*, for us.

13. **Other lords**, foreign despots, like the Persians. *But no*

14. [1] *They are* dead, they shall not live; *they are* [2] deceased,
they shall not rise:
Therefore thou hast visited
And destroyed them, and made all their memory
To perish.

A Yet More Glorious Day (26:15–19)

15. Thou hast increased the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation; thou art glorified:
Thou hast enlarged all the borders of the land.
16. LORD, in trouble have they [3] visited thee, [4] they poured out a prayer
When thy chastening was upon them.
17. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, [5] is in pain
And crieth out in her pangs;
So have we been before thee, O LORD.

[1] Heb. *the dead shall not live, the shades shall not arise.* [2] m. *shades;* Heb. *rephaim.* [3] m. *looked for.* [4] Gr. *with small* (perhaps originally *bitter*) *affliction was thy chastening to us.* [5] Gr. om.

other do we know (so the Greek version) *besides Thee: Thy name we name*, in praise, now that the tyranny is over, the tyrants dead (vs. 14) and Jerusalem secure (vs. 1).

14. This verse, which appears to refer to the permanent prostration, in death, of the tyrants who had "lorded" it over Israel, should be rendered as follows: *Dead men cannot live, shades* (cf. 14:9) *cannot rise.* Thou hast made **all their memory** to perish, *i.e.*, every *memorial* of them, everything that brings them back to mind.

15. Through the recent successes (vss. 1, 2) the nation and its borders have been enlarged, and thus *Thou hast gotten Thee glory* rather than **art glorified**).

16. By a few simple changes this verse, which is not satisfactory in its present form, would read as follows: *In trouble we sought Thee, we cried out in distress, when Thy chastisement came upon us.*

17, 18. These verses give a graphic picture of the agonized but

18. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we
have as it were brought forth wind;
We have not wrought any deliverance in the
earth;
[1] Neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.
19. [2] Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise.
Awake and sing,
Ye that dwell in the dust;
For thy dew is *as* the dew of [3] herbs,
And the earth shall [4] cast forth the [5] dead.

[1] m. *neither have inhabitants of the world been born.* [2] Gr. *The dead shall arise and they that are in the tombs shall be raised, and they that are in the earth shall rejoice; for the dew from thee is healing to them; but the land of the ungodly shall fall.* [3] Heb. *lights.* [4] Heb. *let fall.* [5] m. *shades;* Heb. *rephaim.*

ineffective efforts of Israel in the past — efforts which brought *no deliverance to the land*, and no increase to the population (cf. margin). The word **fallen** in vs. 18 and **cast** (same verb in Hebrew) in vs. 19 refers to *birth.*

19. The men were few (cf. 24:6). The situation is now indeed greatly improved (vs. 15), but a yet more glorious day is coming, when Israel's dead will be raised again to share the blessings of the ransomed people in their larger borders (vs. 15). This daring thought is introduced very abruptly. Unfortunately the text and the grammar are not as certain as we could wish, but probably the words originally ran: *Thy dead shall arise, the dwellers in the dust shall awake and shout for joy.* The **dead bodies** may have been inserted to make more prominent the idea of bodily resurrection. It is only *thy* dead, *i.e.* Israelites, who are to rise; the dead who oppressed them *shall not rise* (vs. 14). The manner of the resurrection appears to be suggested in the last clause of the vs.; *for dew of lights, i.e.* of supernal light, *is Thy dew, and earth shall bring the shades to birth.* The dew is represented as falling from the upper regions of heavenly light upon the dusty graves of Israel's dead, quickening their inhabitants into life, as dew quickens the grass and the flowers.

With its vision of a day on which the faithful dead, triumphant over death, will take their places side by side with the living members of the commonwealth of Israel, the verse forms an admirable conclusion to the grateful praise and the tender hopes of the poem.

Israel's Security in the Great World Judgment (26:20–27:1)

20. Come, my people, enter into thy chambers,
And shut thy doors about thee:
Hide thyself for a little moment,
Until the indignation be overpast.
21. For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of his place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity:
The earth also shall disclose her blood,
And shall no more cover her slain.
27. In that day the Lord
With his sore and great and strong sword
Shall punish leviathan the swift serpent;
And leviathan the crooked serpent:
And he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

26:20–27:1. This picture of the security of Israel is the continuation of 25:6–8; it illustrates practically what is meant by the promised removal of Israel's reproach (25:8). While the hostile world-powers are punished, she is hidden and saved.

20 f. The **indignation** is the storm of judgment which will sweep across the wicked world, when Jehovah comes **out of his place**, *i.e.* heaven, to avenge the deeds of blood. **The earth shall disclose the blood** which it had absorbed, and which therefore could not cry for vengeance (Gen. 4:11), and the corpses of the **slain** shall be exposed in proof of the murderers' guilt.

27:1. Jehovah's mighty **sword** would speedily (26:21) annihilate the hostile empires (24:21). Whether the two **leviathans** and the **dragon** represent three empires or one, is not clear — probably three; in that case, the sea-dragon is no doubt Egypt (Ezek. 29:3), the other two, if the passage come from the fourth century, will probably be Babylonia and Persia, the two most recent oppressors of Israel. In **the swift** or *fleeing* **serpent**, **the crooked** or *coiled* **serpent**, and **the sea-dragon**, there is an allusion to the old Babylonian story of the victory of Marduk, for whom the Hebrews substituted Jehovah, over the primeval monster which

SONG OF THE VINEYARD (27 : 2–6)

2. In that day:
[1] A vineyard of wine, sing ye [2] unto it.
3. [3] I the LORD do keep it;
I will water it every moment:
Lest any hurt it,
I will keep it night and day.
4. Fury is not in me.

Would that the briers and thorns
Were against me in battle!
I would march upon them,
I would burn them together.
5. Or else let him take hold of my strength,
That he may make peace with me;
Yea, let him make peace with me.

6. In days to come shall Jacob take root:
Israel shall blossom and bud:
And they shall fill the face of the world with fruit.

[1] Tar. and some Gr. and Heb. MSS. read *a pleasant vineyard*. [2] m. *of*. [3] In vss. 3–5, Gr. diverges very widely from Heb.

represented chaos. That ancient conquest was but an adumbration of this over the latter-day monsters.

27 : 2–6. This piece is loosely connected with the last by the general thought of Jehovah's care for Israel. It is the counterpart of that other song of the vineyard (5 : 1–7) where its fate was so different.

2. Read: *In that day it shall be said: Delightsome vineyard, sing ye of it.*

4 f. Jehovah cherishes no **fury** against his vineyard, Israel; but he will wage deadly war against the *thorns and thistles, i.e.*, the enemies of Israel (cf. 2 Sam. 23 : 6 f.). Even for them, however, there is mercy, if only they will **take hold of my stronghold**, *i.e.* flee for refuge to Jehovah, and **make peace with me**.

6. Israel's future prosperity will be wide as the world.

JEHOVAH'S MERCY TO ISRAEL (27 : 7–11)

7. Hath he smitten him as he smote those that smote him?
Or is he slain according to the slaughter of [1] them
that were slain by him?
8. In measure, when thou sendest her away, thou dost
contend with her;
He hath removed *her* with his rough blast in the day
of the east wind.
9. Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be [2] purged,
And this is all the fruit of taking away his sin;
When he maketh all the stones of the altar
As chalkstones that are beaten in sunder,
So that the Asherim and the sun-images shall rise no
more.

[1] Gr. Syr. *those that slew him.* [2] m. *expiated.*

27 : 7–11. This section, like the last, acknowledges Jehovah's tenderness towards Israel, here especially manifested in the contrast between Israel's fate and that of her enemies.

7. *Hath he* (Jehovah) *smitten him* (Israel), *as he* (Jehovah) *smote those* (the foreign oppressors) *that smote him* (Israel)? Israel suffered at the hands of the Persians, but not so terribly as the Persians suffered at the hands of Alexander the Great, who overthrew their empire. *Or was he* (Israel) *slain as those* oppressors *who slew him were slain?*

8. This difficult verse is now usually regarded as a gloss to vs. 10, elaborating the fate of the *city*. This would explain the feminine pronouns, which do not naturally follow the masculines in vs. 7; and the figure is that of a bird's nest carried away by a storm (cf. 16 : 2). The whole verse should probably run somewhat as follows: *By scaring her away, by sending her forth, he contended with her; he removed her with his rough blast in the day of the east wind.*

9. **By this**: rather, *on this condition*. For the **Asherim** and the **sun-images**, cf. 17 : 8. The meaning is that the destruction of the idolatrous symbols is, in one aspect, the condition, in another the **fruit**, of the forgiveness of their sins. For **when he maketh**, read *that he should make.*

10. For the defenced city is solitary,
An habitation, deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness:
There shall the calf feed,
And there shall he lie down and consume the branches thereof,
11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off;
The women shall come, and set them on fire:
For it is a people of no understanding;
Therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them,
And he that formed them will shew them no favour.

Gathered Home (27 : 12 f.)

12. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the Lord shall beat off *his fruit*, from the flood of the River unto [1] the brook of Egypt,

[1] Gr. *Rhinocoroura*.

10 f. These verses vividly describe the present desolation of Jerusalem (cf. 24 : 10–12) — a place where cattle pasture and women come to gather fuel. The divine *pity* and *favor* are withheld from the people because they have **no understanding** — that is, because they are impenitent, and have not abandoned their sinful idolatry. But if this be abandoned, the sin will be expiated (vs. 9) and the glorious future will begin (cf. vss. 6, 12 f.).

27 : 12, 13. The great apocalypse (Chaps. 24–27) impressively closes with a vision of the return of the Jews from the lands in which they had been scattered, to Jerusalem, where they can worship their own God in his own peculiar home. These vss. appear to follow 27 : 1.

12. For **flood**, read *ears*. *Jehovah will beat out ears of wheat from the river* Euphrates *to the torrent of Egypt*, the southwestern boundary of Palestine — these being the ideal limits of Israel's kingdom. The final judgment is compared to a *threshing*, in which the heathen, like the chaff, will be swept away, and the

And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of
Israel.

13. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That a great trumpet shall be blown; Mat. 24:31
And they shall come which were [1] ready to perish in
the land of Assyria,
And they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt;
And they shall worship the Lord in the holy mountain
at Jerusalem.

[1] m. *lost.*

Jews, like the good grain, will be **gathered one by one**; not one of them will be lost.

13. From the wider world, too, here represented by **Assyria** and **Egypt**, those who were *lost* and **outcasts** will come to Jerusalem at the sound of the **trumpet** — one of the imposing features of apocalyptic utterance (cf. Mat. 24:31). The vision significantly ends in an act of *worship*.

The great world judgment is over; the hostile powers have been annihilated (vs. 1), and the Jews, redeemed and restored to their own land, do homage to their God upon the holy temple hill.

WARNINGS AND PROMISES TO JERUSALEM
(Chaps. 28–33)

28 : 1 — Woe to Samaria (28 : 1–6)

28. Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim,
And to the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
Which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are
[1] overcome with wine.
2. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one;
As a tempest of hail, a destroying storm,
As a tempest of mighty waters overflowing,
Shall he cast down to the earth [2] with the hand.
3. The crown of the pride of the drunkards of Ephraim
Shall be trodden under foot:

[1] Heb. *smitten down.* [2] m. *with violence.*

A fourth group of prophecies is constituted by Chaps. 28–33, which come from Isaiah's old age, and centre round the fortunes of Jerusalem during the years 704–701 B.C., when Judah, menaced by Assyria under Sennacherib, was secretly planning an alliance with Egypt. This group contains some of Isaiah's noblest work.

28 : 1–6. Obviously this threat of Samaria must precede her fall (in 721 B.C.). Isaiah, however, appropriately prefixes it to the prophecies concerning Jerusalem about twenty years later, thereby ominously suggesting that as Jerusalem was like Samaria in character (vss. 1, 7) so she may be also in her fate.

1. The **proud crown of the drunkards of Ephraim** was the city of Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom, which *crowned* a hill that rose in the middle of a **fat** (*i.e.* fertile) **valley**. Drunkenness was one of her besetting sins (Amos 6 : 6). Apparently garlands of flowers were worn at carousals (vs. 3) — a fact which lends point to the picture. "The prophet describes Samaria as the head of a drunken reveller, encircled with a wreath of fading flowers" (O. C. Whitehouse).

2. The **strong one** is the Assyrian, who will come like a *destroying storm* and *lay* Samaria *prostrate upon the ground, with violence* (cf. margin).

4. And the fading flower of his glorious beauty,
Which is on the head of the fat valley,
Shall be as the firstripe fig before the summer;
Which when he that looketh upon it seeth,
While it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.

5. In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory,
And for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people:
6. And for a spirit of [1] judgement to him that sitteth in judgement,
And for strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate.

THE SCOFFERS OF JERUSALEM THREATENED (28:7–22)

Isaiah's Solemn Warning to the Drunken Priests and Prophets (28:7–13)

7. But these also [2] have erred through wine,
And through strong drink [3] are gone astray;

[1] SV *justice.* [2] m. *reel.* [3] m. *stagger.*

3 f. The lovely city will be *trampled underfoot;* it will be *swallowed* up by Assyria, as greedily as one swallows the dainty **first ripe fig** which appears in June, several weeks before the fig season. In point of fact Samaria stood a siege of three years.

5 f. These verses, which interrupt the context, are probably a later foil to vss. 1–4. They look out upon the fortunes of the *remnant of Jehovah's people* in the Messianic days, when he will inspire them with *justice* and *valor,* — equip them for the duties of administration and war.

28:7–13. This scene is very dramatic. Isaiah, mocked by the priests and prophets whom he has surprised in their carousals, answers their mockery by the terrible threat that God would yet speak to them a more strange and unwelcome message than his own; he would speak in *Assyrian.* When the Assyrians, with their foreign jargon, were scouring the land of Judah, then it would be clear that Isaiah had been right after all.

7 f. **These also** in Jerusalem (vs. 14) as well as in Samaria

The priest and the prophet
Have erred through strong drink,
They are swallowed up of wine,
They are gone astray through strong drink;
They err in vision,
They stumble in judgement.
8. For all tables are full of vomit *and* filthiness,
So that there is no place *clean.*

9. "Whom will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to understand the message?
Them that are weaned from the milk,
And drawn from the breasts?
10. For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept;
Line upon line, line upon line;
Here a little,
And there a little."

1 Cor. 14:21 11. Nay, but by *men of* strange lips
And with another tongue
Will he speak to this people:

(vs. 1), were guilty of abominable excess — all the more deplorable that they were *religious* leaders. Possibly the scene was in the temple court. **Judgment**, the decision of cases.

9 f. These are the contemptuous and ironical words with which the prophet is greeted as he comes upon the drunken revellers. The priests had the **knowledge**, the prophets the divine **message**; they needed no instruction from Isaiah, they were not babies. They would have nothing to do with his perpetual and monotonous jingle, inimitably expressed in the original Hebrew by the uncouth *tsaw latsaw tsaw latsaw qaw laqaw qaw laqaw* — suggestively rendered by Whitehouse "law on law, saw on saw."

11. The indignant prophet immediately hurls his threat. They had rejected and satirized the divine message as it came through him, they would be compelled to listen to it as it came through **men of strange lips and another tongue**, *i.e.* the Assyrians.

12. To whom he said,
"This is the rest,
Give ye rest to him that is weary;
And this is the refreshing:"
Yet they would not hear.
13. Therefore shall the word of the LORD
Be unto them
Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line;
Here a little,
There a little;
That they may go,
And fall backward,
And be broken, and snared,
And taken.

The Folly of the Egyptian Alliance (28:14–22)

14. Wherefore hear the word of the LORD,
Ye scornful men,

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12. Read: **he who said to them**. The words that follow summarize Isaiah's general message; **this is the** true **rest**, namely, quiet confidence in God (30:15). Political alliances, such as Judah was then negotiating with Egypt (vs. 15), often led to international complications, sometimes to war; those thus rendered **weary**, exhausted, would find **rest** and **refreshing** in abstaining from political ambitions and combinations, and in simply trusting Jehovah.

13. Because *they refused to listen* to Isaiah's demand for simple faith, the divine message would come to them again in a more terrible form, fraught with ruin. With grim irony, Isaiah describes the message which the Assyrians will bring in the same jingling words as they had used to describe his own. The words will be stranger than Isaiah's — real foreign words, but their meaning will be plain enough; they spell doom for Judah.

14. The announcement concerns the priests, prophets (vs. 7),

That rule this people
Which is in Jerusalem:
15. Because ye have said, "We have made
A covenent with death,
And with [1] hell
Are we at agreement;
When the overflowing [2] scourge shall pass through,
It shall not come unto us;
For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood have we hid ourselves."

16. Therefore thus saith
The Lord GOD,
1 Pet. 2:6 Rom. 9:33 Eph. 2:20 "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone,
A tried stone,
A precious corner *stone* of sure foundation:
Rom. 10:11 He that believeth shall not [3] make haste.

[1] Heb. *Sheol.* [2] Gr. *storm* (flood). [3] Gr. *be ashamed;* SV *be in haste.*

and the **rulers** generally, who, resting their faith, like Ahaz (Chap. 7), rather in political alliances than in God, are appropriately described as *scoffers* (cf. vs. 22), **scorners** of religion and the unseen.

15 goes with 16; **because . . . therefore.** The vss. contrast the false with the true ground of confidence — faith in Egypt with faith in Jehovah. By superstitious and necromantic practices, connected perhaps with Egyptian mysteries, the leaders imagined themselves to bear a charmed life, secure against **Death** and **Sheol.** The **overflowing** *flood* (cf. 8:7 f.; rather than **scourge**), that is, the Assyrians, could not reach them. Such sources of confidence, however, are nothing but *lies* and **falsehood** — Isaiah's own words, which he puts into their mouths.

16. To their diplomacy and superstition Isaiah opposes *faith;* with the scheming and scoffing politicians, "that rule this people in Jerusalem" (vs. 14), he contrasts the little band of the *faithful.* They are *the precious foundation stone* of the building yet to be raised on Zion — that is, of a community consisting of those who, like Isaiah, have *faith* in God and who care for *justice* and *righteousness* (vs. 17). The foundation is appropriately conceived as being laid **in Zion,** as that was Jehovah's earthly home, and with Zion's

17. And I will make judgement the line,
And righteousness the plummet,
And the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies,
And the waters shall overflow the hiding place.
18. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled,
And your [1] agreement with [2] hell shall not stand;
When the overflowing scourge shall pass through,
Then ye shall be trodden down by it.
19. As often as it passeth through,
It shall take you;
For morning by morning shall it pass through,
By day and by night:
And it shall be nought but terror
To understand the message.
20. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it;
And the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

[1] Gr. *confidence in.* [2] Heb. *Sheol.*

fortunes were implicated, for the time, the fortunes of the true religion. (See Introduction, p. 11.) The last clause should perhaps run: *the man of faith shall not give way* (or *be put to shame*, (so Gr.). It is the same message as Isaiah offered to Ahaz, that faith is the secret of firmness and fixity (7:9).

17 f. **Judgment**, *i.e. justice.* The standards of the kingdom of God are to be ethical. Faith (vs. 16) must express itself in works, religion in morality. But the **refuge**, found in the Egyptian alliance, respects neither morality nor religion; it is but a house built on the sand, doomed to be swept away by the (Assyrian) flood — swept into *death* and *Sheol*, from which their superstitious covenant could not save them.

19. **You** — emphatic; you sceptics and scoffers. Then, when the terrible flood (or scourge) moves ceaselessly and inexorably on — then perhaps you will believe the prophetic **message**; its meaning will be only too plain.

20. A proverb. The Egyptian alliance will prove inadequate; it will not *cover* the situation.

21. For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim,
He shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon;
That he may do his work,
His strange work,
And bring to pass his act,
His strange act.

22. Now therefore be ye not scorners,
Lest your bands be made strong:
For a consummation, and that determined,
Have I heard from the Lord, the LORD of hosts, upon the whole earth.

THE PATIENCE AND CONSIDERATENESS OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE (28:23–29)

23. Give ye ear, and hear my voice;
Hearken, and hear my speech.

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21. **Mount Perazim** and **Gibeon** (1 Chron. 14:16), or *Geba*, where David defeated the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:20, 25). Jehovah, through the Assyrians, would rise up against his people as formerly he had risen against their enemies; that is why his action is described as **strange** and *alien* (the Hebrew words are different).

22. Isaiah's final warning to the *scoffers* (vs. 14) not to tighten still further, by their scoffing, the **bonds** of sin, with which penalty was inextricably bound up (5:18); for to the sensitive ears of the prophet (22:14) had come from Jehovah the message of *destruction decreed* (cf. 10:23).

These verses (7–22) are remarkably vivid; the "weary" people in the background (vs. 12); and on the one side, the drunken clergy with their ribald mimicry of the prophet, and the secret treaty, with its concomitant of dark superstition; on the other hand, Isaiah, flaming with holy indignation, warning the scorners of the oncoming flood, himself kept steady by his splendid faith.

28:23–29. The bearing of this curious little section upon the

24. Doth the plowman plow continually to sow?
Doth he *continually* open and break the clods of his ground?
25. When he hath [1] made plain the face thereof,
Doth he not cast abroad the fitches and scatter the cummin,
And put in the wheat [2] in rows and the barley in the appointed place
And the spelt in the border thereof?
26. For his God doth instruct him aright,
And doth teach him.

27. For the fitches are not threshed with a sharp *threshing* instrument,

[1] SV *levelled.* [2] Gr. om.

context is not easy to determine. It describes, generally, how the farmer adapts his methods to circumstances — he is not always doing the same thing (ploughing) nor always doing it in the same way (sowing) — and, more particularly, with what tender consideration this principle is applied when, as in threshing, severe measures are necessary. The implication is that the farmer's methods are a parable or antitype of the divine dealings with men; God will be careful, like the farmer, not to destroy in the process of threshing. The passage has the effect of softening the grave announcement, just made, of the impending judgment on Judah (vss. 21 f.), and may be from a later hand.

24 f. The farmer is not **continually** ploughing; he ploughs with a view to the sowing and the harvest. So for Judah, now ploughed by oppressors (cf. Ps. 129: 3), quiet fruitful days are in store. In 25b, read simply: *does he not set wheat and barley, and spelt as its border?*

26. The farmer's agricultural knowledge, which he owes to tradition and experience, is here regarded as imparted by **God** himself. The methods of adaptation and patience which he teaches the farmer, are the methods he himself adopts in his conduct of history.

27. When the farmer threshes, he adapts his methods to the nature and delicacy of the object to be threshed; so also God.

Neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the
cummin :
But the fitches are beaten out with a staff,
And the cummin with a rod.
28. [1] Bread *corn* is ground ;
For he will not ever be threshing it :
And though the wheel of his cart and his horses scatter
it,
He doth not grind it.
29. This also cometh from the LORD of hosts,
Which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in
wisdom.

THE CHARACTER AND FATE OF JERUSALEM (29 : 1–15)

The Fate of Jerusalem (29 : 1–8)

29. [2] Ho Ariel, Ariel,
The city where David encamped !
Add ye year to year ;
Let the feasts come round :

[1] m. *is bread* corn *crushed? Nay, he will not ever be threshing it.* [2] m. *Woe to.*

28. This verse should probably run: *Is bread (corn) crushed? Nay, he does not keep threshing it continually: but, when he has rolled his wagon wheel over it he scatters it, but does not crush it.* (So Duhm.)

29. These wonderful principles that govern the farmer's action can only have had a divine origin.

29 : 1–15. This passage belongs to a period two or three years before the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians (about 703 B.C.). It portrays with grim power the impending fate of the city, and the pathetic incredulity and blindness of the people. It begins with **Woe** (cf. 28 : 1).

1. **Ariel**: an obscure name for Jerusalem. It probably means *altar-hearth*, and may have been suggested to Isaiah by the sight

2. Then will I distress Ariel,
And there shall be mourning and lamentation,
And she shall be unto me as Ariel.
3. And I will camp against thee [1] round about,
And will lay siege against thee with a fort,
And I will raise siege works against thee.
4. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground,
And thy speech shall be low out of the dust;
And thy voice shall be as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground,
And thy speech shall [2] whisper out of the dust.
5. But the multitude of thy foes
Shall be like small dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones
As chaff that passeth away:
Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.
6. She shall be visited of the LORD of hosts

[1] Gr. *like David* (cf. vs. 1). [2] m. Heb. *chirp*.

of the great altar, with its bleeding victims, in the temple court, where the prophet may have delivered this speech at a harvest *festival*. The name implies that Jerusalem would drip, like the altar, with the blood of the slain — and that within a year or two (when *year was added to year*).

2. **Distress**, *i.e.* by the Assyrian army; and, instead of festal joy, there shall be *moaning and bemoaning*, and Jerusalem shall become a veritable **Ariel**, drenched with blood.

4. *And humbly shalt thou speak from the ground.* The faintness of the prostrate city's voice is compared to the twittering of a ghost (cf. 8:19).

5. This verse, predicting the annihilation of Jerusalem's foes, is probably, like vss. 7, 8, the insertion of some later patriot, who believed in Zion's ultimate triumph over all her foes.

6. With this verse should go the words *and suddenly, full suddenly, it shall come*, from vs. 5. The words that follow describe how sternly Jerusalem will be **visited**. In the Assyrian army,

With thunder, and with earthquake, and with great noise,
With whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a devouring fire.
7. And the multitude of all the nations
That fight against Ariel,
Even all that fight against her and her stronghold,
And that distress her,
Shall be as a dream,
As a vision of the night.
8. And it shall be as when an hungry man dreameth,
And, behold, he eateth;
But he awaketh,
And his soul is empty:
Or as when a thirsty man dreameth,
And, behold, he drinketh;
But he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint,
And his soul hath appetite:
So shall the multitude of all the nations be,
That fight against mount Zion.

The Spiritual Torpor and Religious Formality of the People
(29:9–15)

9. [1] Tarry ye and wonder;
[2] Take your pleasure and be blind:

[1] m. *be ye amazed.* [2] m. *blind yourselves.*

Jehovah will come as a swift and terrible storm — with thunder, lightning, etc. Here the original message probably ends.

7 and 8 announce, in later fashion, the disappointment and defeat of Jerusalem's enemies. They will be like dreamers who awake to find themselves mocked by the reality; nay, they will be even as an unsubstantial dream itself.

[1] They are drunken, but not with wine;
[2] They stagger, but not with strong drink.
10. For the LORD hath poured out upon you
The spirit of deep sleep, Rom. 11:8
And hath closed your eyes, the prophets;
And your heads, the seers, hath he covered.
11. And all vision is become unto you
As the words of a book that is sealed, which men Rev. 5:1
deliver to one that is learned, saying, "Read
this, I pray thee": and he saith, "I cannot, for
12. it is sealed": and the book is delivered to him
that is not learned, saying, "Read this, I pray
thee": and he saith, "I am not learned."

[1] Gr. *be drunken.* [2] Gr. om.

9 f. **Tarry**: read with Cheyne:

"Stupefy yourselves and be stupid,
Blind yourselves and be blind;
Be drunken, but not with wine:
Stagger, but not with strong drink."

The imperatives are equivalent to very emphatic futures (cf. 8:9). The prophet means that their past apathy will be punished by continued apathy (cf. 6:9 f.), which will render them insensible to the signs of the coming storm (vs. 6) till it is upon them; and when they do open their sealed and stupid eyes, it will be to look upon the awful *flame of devouring fire* (vs. 6), and they will reel and stagger, amid that terrible storm, like drunken men.

10. **The LORD hath poured**, etc.; this torpor is, in one aspect, a divine judicial penalty; in another, the effect of psychological law — the atrophy of an unused faculty. God had **closed** their **eyes**, but the people had closed their own eyes. With sealed eyes and muffled heads they could see nothing. Omit **the prophets** and **the seers** as glosses; *all* the people are guilty — not these only.

11 f. **All vision**, *the vision of all this.* These verses illustrate the complete spiritual incapacity of all classes, educated and illiterate. No one can interpret the signs of the times, or believe in the coming judgment.

13. And the LORD said,
"Forasmuch as this people draw nigh *unto me,*
Mat. 15 : 8 f. Mk. 7 : 6 f. And with their mouth and with their lips do honour me,
But [1] have removed their heart far from me,
And [2] their fear of me
Is a commandment of men which hath been taught *them;*
14. Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people,
Even a marvellous work and a wonder:
And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish,
1 Cor. 1 : 19 And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

15. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide
Their counsel from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark,
And they say, "Who seeth us?
And who knoweth us?"

[1] Gr. *their heart is far from me* (cf. Mat. 15 : 8). [2] Gr. *in vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men* (cf. Mat. 15 : 9).

13. With this spiritual obtuseness goes religious formality, which imagines that religion is a matter of prescribed and recited formulas, instead of being a thing of the **heart**. They **draw nigh with their mouth** (omit *and*) — a very trenchant description of insincere worship.

14. Because their worship was but a heartless *lip*-worship, Jehovah will do some strange (cf. 28 : 21) and **marvellous** thing (cf. vs. 6), which will convince them of the futility of all their clever scheming (cf. vs. 15).

15. A **woe** (cf. 28 : 1; 29 : 1) is pronounced upon those who *hide deep their purpose from Jehovah; i.e.* who secretly negotiated for an Egyptian alliance, without consulting Jehovah through his prophet. Despite their secrecy, however, Isaiah is aware of their plan.

Doubters rebuked by a Vision of Israel's Welfare in the Latter Days (29:16–24)

16. [1] Ye turn things upside down! Shall the potter be
counted as clay;
That the thing made should say of him that made it, Rom. 9:20
"He made me not;"
Or the thing framed say of him that framed it, "He
hath no understanding"?
17. Is it not a very little while,
And Lebanon shall be turned into [2] a fruitful field,
And [2] the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest?
18. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the
book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and
out of darkness.
19. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord,

[1] m. *O your perversity!* [2] Gr. *mount Carmel.*

29:16–24. Some recent scholars believe that this section is the work of a later age. It has no intimate relation to the context, whose *woes* (29:15; 30:1) are here replaced by tender promises.

16. Read with margin *O your perversity!* The perversity of those here addressed consisted in doubting whether their hopes of Israel's deliverance and welfare would ever be realized. But surely God, as the **potter**, has power to mould the **clay**.

17. A great transformation is impending, when the great heathen world-power, typified by **Lebanon** (cf. 10:34), shall be levelled, like the field, and Israel, now lowly, shall be exalted like the forest of Lebanon (cf. 32:15). Or the meaning may be that the physical world will also be transformed, the fruitful becoming more fruitful; in that case, **forest** = *luxurious* forest.

18. *In that day* of transformation, the spiritually *deaf* and *blind* will understand and respond to the ancient prophetic promise, **the words of the book** which had hitherto been to them sealed and unintelligible (vss. 11, 12).

19, 20. The *humble, poor*, crushed Jews would rejoice because,

And the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy
One of Israel.
20. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the
scorner ceaseth,
And all they that watch for iniquity are cut off:
21. That make a man an offender [1] in a cause,
And lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate,
And turn aside the just with a thing of nought.
22. Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham,
concerning the house of Jacob:
Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
Neither shall his face now wax pale.
23. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands,
in the midst of him,
They shall sanctify my name;
Yea, they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob,
And shall stand in awe of the God of Israel.

[1] m. *by* their *words*.

by the mercy of their God, the *tyrant* who oppressed them, the apostates who *scorned* them, and all who were *vigilant in the cause of iniquity*, would then have disappeared.

21. The offenders specially mentioned in vs. 21 are those who denounce men *with a word* (rather than **in a cause**), *i.e.* calumniously; those who *lay a snare* by speech or bribery, *for him that reproveth in the* city *gate* (where cases were tried), *i.e.* for the judge and those who **with a thing of nought**, *i.e.* on an empty pretext, *turn aside the just* from the decision to which he is entitled. The old sin of legal injustice (1:17) will have vanished *in that day*.

22. Read: *Therefore thus saith Jehovah, the God of the house of Jacob, who redeemed Abraham.* The future redemption of the people (here called **Jacob**, as often Israel) will match the ancient redemption of Abraham.

23. Omit *his children*. Read: *when he* (*i.e.* Jacob, the people) *seeth the work of mine hands*, *i.e.* the glorious redemption and transformation, the result will be a deeper reverence and awe (cf. 8:13).

24. They also that err in spirit shall come to understanding,
And they that murmur shall learn doctrine.

The Egyptian Alliance a Ruinous Policy (30:1–17)

The Embassy to Egypt (30:1–5, 6 f.)

30. Woe to the rebellious children,
Saith the Lord,
That take counsel,
But not of me;
And that [1] cover with a covering,
But not of my spirit,
That they may add
Sin to sin:
2. That walk to go down into Egypt,
And have not asked at my mouth;
To [2] strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,
And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
3. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame,
And the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

[1] m. *weave a web* or *pour out a drink offering.* [2] m. *flee to the stronghold of Pharaoh.*

24. The erring and discontented Jews would then submit themselves to the discipline of the law.

30:1–17. The Egyptian alliance, already vaguely alluded to (29:15), is now explicitly described and denounced as at once a folly and an apostasy. It is folly to trust to fickle Egypt; and trust in Egypt springs from that lack of confidence in Jehovah which will bring the state, like a tottering wall, to sudden ruin.

1. **Woe**: cf. 28:1; 29:1, 15. For **take counsel**, read *carry out a purpose;* for **cover with a covering**, read with margin, *pour out a drink offering, i.e.* make a treaty; and at end read *adding sin to sin.* The *children* enter upon this important alliance without consulting their father Jehovah (cf. 1:2) through his prophet Isaiah (cf. 29:15).

2 f. **To strengthen themselves**, etc.: read *to flee to the shelter of Pharaoh.* Egyptian help would prove a delusion.

4. For his princes are at Zoan,
And his ambassadors [1] are come to Hanes.
5. They shall all be ashamed
Of a people that cannot profit them,
That are not an help nor profit,
But a shame, and also a reproach.

6. The [2] burden of the beasts of the South.
Through the land of trouble and anguish,
From whence come the lioness and the lion,
The viper and fiery flying serpent,
They carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses,
And their treasures upon the [3] bunches of camels,
To a people that shall not profit *them*.

[1] Gr. *shall labor in vain.* [2] m. *oracle concerning.* [3] SV *humps.*

4 f. **His**, *i.e.* Pharaoh's. For **Zoan**, cf. 19:11; **Hanes**, south of Memphis; the two names indicate the northern and southern limits of Egypt. Despite the extent of Pharaoh's sway, **all** who, like Judah, appeal to him for help, *come to shame* (or, by another reading, *come into bad odor*). With some very slight changes, however, a somewhat more appropriate rendering may be obtained: *For the princes* (*i.e.* of Judah) *have encamped in Zoan, and his ambassadors reach Hanes; they have all brought presents to a people that cannot help.* This picture of the royal ambassadors of Judah with their presents would then be a companion to that of vss. 6 f.

6 f. This is an independent oracle, though parallel, in thought, to the last. It describes the dangers of the **South**, the *Negeb* (cf. 21:1), the wilderness south of Judah (cf. Deut. 8:15), which the Judæan ambassadors, their animals loaded with presents, had to cross on their way to Egypt. In the somewhat obscure introductory words *Oracle concerning the beasts of the south* (cf. margin), the *beasts* are perhaps those alluded to in the course of the verse. For **from whence come the lioness and the lion**, read *of the roaring lion and lioness.* **Serpent**, cf. 14:29. The dangers are enumerated to illustrate the folly of the embassy, which is doomed in

7. For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose:
Therefore have I called her
Rahab that sitteth still.

Judah's Rebellion and Ruin (30:8–17)

8. Now go, write it before them on a tablet,
And inscribe it in a book,
That it may be for the time to come
[1] For ever and ever.
9. For it is a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children that will not hear
The law of the LORD:
10. Which say to the seers, "See not";
And to the prophets, "Prophesy not unto us right things,
Speak unto us smooth things,
Prophesy deceits:

[1] Syr. Vg. Tar. *for a witness for ever.*

advance to be fruitless. **Rahab**, etc.: these words are very obscure. Almost all that is certain is that Rahab, a mythological monster (Job 9:13), stands for *Egypt* (Ps. 87:4) with her blustering but impotent arrogance.

30:8–17. Isaiah's message has been received with mockery (28:10, 14). He therefore retires to his house, and commits it to writing as an everlasting witness to the unbelief of his people.

8. **Now** that the message had been spurned (cf. 8:16–18). **The it** is the message, whether the substance of Chaps. 28–30 or more briefly the fine summary of it in 30:15 f. Read, with margin, *for a witness forever.*

9 f. **The law of Jehovah** is *instruction* such as Isaiah had given (cf. 1:10). There were others like-minded with Isaiah, **seers** and **prophets**, whose words were also spurned. In vs. 10, as in 28:15, Isaiah puts his own estimate into the mouth of the people when he makes them say **prophesy illusions** (or *delusions*).

11. Get you out of the way,
Turn aside out of the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel
To cease from before us."
12. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel,
"Because ye despise this word,
And trust in [1] oppression and perverseness,
And stay thereon;
13. Therefore this iniquity
Shall be to you
As a breach ready to fall,
Swelling out in a high wall,
Whose breaking cometh suddenly
At an instant."
14. And he shall break it as a potter's vessel is broken,
Breaking it in pieces without sparing;
So that there shall not be found
Among the pieces thereof a sherd [2]

[1] Gr. *falsehood.* [2] SV adds *wherewith.*

11. **Get ye out of the way**, *i.e. your* way of teaching: the people request the prophets to give up their threatening and alarming message, and to *trouble them no more with the Holy One of Israel.* This is a real revolt from God, though not a formal one; for the people who say this still "draw near him with their mouth and honor him with their lips" (29: 13). But it is the *holy*, the moral, demands of the prophets that provoke them; it is their own will, and not his, that they wish to see done (cf. 30: 1 f.).

12. To their speech, vss. 10 f., the prophet replies; and the reply is offered in the name of the *holy* One, with whom they wished to have nothing to do. **This word**, denouncing the Egyptian alliance, a policy here described as *wile* (rather than **oppression**) *and craft.*

13 f. A very expressive figure. As a wall in which a breach has been made bulges out and finally comes suddenly crashing down, so by her crooked policy will the state of Judah collapse in swift and irretrievable ruin — with not a useful fragment left.

To take fire from the hearth,
Or to take water withal out of the cistern.
15. For thus saith the Lord GOD,
The Holy One of Israel,
"In returning and rest
Shall ye be saved;
In quietness and confidence
Shall be your strength:
And ye would not.
16. But ye said, 'No,
For we will flee upon horses';
Therefore shall ye flee:
And, 'We will ride upon the swift';
Therefore shall they that pursue you be swift,
17. One thousand *shall flee*
At the [1] rebuke of one;
At the [1] rebuke of five shall ye flee:
Till ye be left
As a [2] beacon upon the top of a mountain,
And as an ensign on a hill."

[1] SV *threat.* [2] m. *mast;* SVm. *pole.*

15. This verse is a terse and splendid summary of Isaiah's gospel. Judah's *salvation* depended upon her **turning** away (rather than *returning*) from schemes of political ambition, and *remaining quiet;* but this **quietness** was only possible to those who had **confidence** in Jehovah, in his control of history and in the triumph of his purpose. Therein lay the secret of all real **strength**.

16 f. To this *quiet trust* in the unseen God, Judah preferred the substantial and visible support of Egyptian **horses**. Isaiah grimly reminds them that the *pursuing* Assyrian horses would also be swift; and then their heroism would vanish, a handful of Assyrians (*five*) scattering them completely, the survivors being as lonely as a **beacon**, *mast* (cf. margin), or signal pole on a hill. Omit the first clause *one thousand . . . of one* (from Deut. 32: 30?).

The Final Triumph and Prosperity of Jerusalem (30: 18–33)

Forgiveness and Prosperity (30: 18–26)

18. And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you,
And therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you:
For the LORD is a God of judgement;
Blessed are all they that wait for him.
19. [1] For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem:
Thou shalt weep no more;
He will surely be gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry;
When he shall hear, he will answer thee.
20. And though the LORD give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction,
Yet shall not thy [2] teachers be hidden any more,
But thine eyes shall see thy [2] teachers:

[1] m. *O people that dwellest.* [2] m. *teacher.*

30: 18–33. This passage, with its vision of the divine pity and forgiveness bestowed upon Jerusalem, of her brilliant material and spiritual welfare, and of her signal triumph over Assyria, is in very marked contrast to the last passage, to which it is appended rather than intimately related. It probably expresses the hopes of a much later age.

18 f. The divine yearning ought to be met by the human; "Jehovah *longs* to be gracious to you . . . Happy are all who *long* for him." He is a **God of judgment** — rather *of justice;* he helps Israel to her *rightful* place. In vs. 19, read: *O people in Zion, that dwellest at Jerusalem, thou shalt weep no more* (cf. 25: 8).

20 f. This **bread** and **water**, practically prison fare (1 Kings 22: 27), may suggest a siege. In the era of redemption which follows Jehovah is — characteristically for post-exilic Judaism — regarded as Teacher; *yet thy Teacher* (sing.) *will no more withdraw*

21. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying:
"This is the way, walk ye in it": when ye turn to the
right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
22. And [1] ye shall defile the overlaying of thy graven
images of silver,
And the plating of thy molten images of gold:
Thou shalt cast them away as an [2] unclean thing;
Thou shalt say unto it, "Get thee hence."
23. And he shall give the rain of thy seed that thou shalt
sow the ground withal;
And bread of the increase of the ground, and it shall
be fat and plenteous:
In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.
24. The oxen likewise and the young asses that till the
ground
Shall eat [3] savoury provender, which hath been win-
nowed with the shovel and with the fan.
25. And there shall be upon every lofty mountain,
And upon every high hill rivers *and* streams of water,
In the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

[1] Gr. Vg. *thou shalt.* [2] Heb. *menstruous.* [3] Heb. *salted.*

himself — he would remain in Zion (4:5 f.) — *but thine eyes shall* continually *see thy Teacher*, who would always be ready with a *word* of instruction for those who turned aside.

22. With such a teacher, the people would naturally abandon idolatry, and destroy its symbols as Moses did the golden calf (Exod. 32:20).

23–25. Spiritual blessings (vss. 20 f.) would be crowned with material (Mat. 6:33). In those great days, the land would be gloriously fertile; even the animals would share in the general prosperity — for God does care for the oxen (1 Cor. 9:9). They are to have **salted provender**, of which they are specially fond. From the hills, so frequently parched, would stream abundance of water in those latter days, **in the day of the great slaughter** of the proud heathen, who are here perhaps intended by the **towers.**

26. Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of
the sun,
And the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light
of seven days,
In the day that the LORD bindeth up the hurt of his
people,
And healeth the stroke of their wound.

The Glorious Triumph (30:27–33)

27. Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far,
Burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke:
His lips are full of indignation,
And his tongue is as a devouring fire:
28. And his breath is as an overflowing stream,
That reacheth even unto the neck,
To sift the nations with the sieve of vanity:
And a bridle that causeth to err *shall be* in the jaws
of the peoples.
29. Ye shall have a song

26. The glory of the earth would be matched by the glory of the heavens, the moon shining with the brilliance of the sun, and the sun with seven times its normal splendor.

27. **The name of the LORD**, that is, *Jehovah in some glorious manifestation*, is coming. This fine description of the manifestation combines the figures of a storm and an angry face. The *tongue* of fire is the lightning that flashes from the *heavy rising clouds*.

28. In this verse the figure changes three times: (i) his **breath** is compared to a mountain torrent, suddenly rising to men's necks; (ii) he sifts the heathen nations with a **sieve** which reduces them to nothing — that is, sifts them till they are annihilated; (iii) he is a **bridle**, restraining the nations, and guiding them *astray*, that is, to destruction.

29. When so mighty a God assails Israel's enemies, victory must be hers; and therefore a glad **song** of thanksgiving and praise *shall be yours*, — a song which, for gladness, can only be compared

As in the night when a holy feast is kept;
And gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe
To come into the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel.

30. And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard,
And shall shew the lighting down of his arm,
With the indignation of *his* anger, and the flame of a devouring fire,
With a [1] blast, and tempest, and hailstones.

31. For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be broken in pieces,
[2] Which smote with a rod.

32. And every [3] stroke of the appointed staff,
Which the LORD shall lay upon him,
Shall be with tabrets and harps:
And in battles of shaking will he fight with them.

33. For a Topheth is prepared of old; yea, for the king it is made ready;

[1] m. *crashing.* [2] m. *with his rod shall he smite* him. [3] Heb. *passing.*

to that of the **holy festival**, whether the harvest feast of ingathering, or (because of the reference to the *night*) the passover; or to the joy of those who march, to the sound of music, in festal procession to the temple. These comparisons are instinct with the joy of worship.

30. Jehovah fights for his people as the God of the storm, with his angry thunder and lightning and hail, as long ago he fought against the Canaanites (Josh. 10:11).

31. The awful thunder-peal creates a panic among the enemy. It is difficult to say whether the last clause should be referred to the Assyrians (RV text) or to Jehovah (RV m.).

32. The blows which Jehovah rains upon the enemy will be accompanied by music on the part of the delighted Jews; with music also the Victor is greeted (Exod. 15:20). **Battles of shaking** are battles in which Jehovah *swings* his mighty arm (cf. 19:16).

33. Read, *A pyre has been made ready beforehand, deep and wide;* that is, for burning the Assyrian dead. To a Hebrew ear,

He hath made it deep and large:
The pile thereof is fire and much wood;
The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone,
doth kindle it.

THE FOLLY OF THE EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE (31:1–4)

31. Woe to them that go down
To Egypt for help,
And stay on horses;
And trust in chariots, because they are many,
And in horsemen,
Because they are very strong;
But they look not unto the Holy One of Israel,
Neither seek the LORD!
2. Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil,
And will not call back his words:
But will arise against the house of the evil-doers,
And against the help of them that work iniquity.
3. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God;
And their horses flesh, and not spirit:

---

the word for *pyre* would suggest Topheth, in the valley of Hinnom, where sacrifices were offered to Molech. This may explain the words, *Is this also for Molech?* (or *for the king*, that is, the king of Assyria), which appear to be a later insertion. The meaning is that in a huge fire, carefully prepared and kindled by Jehovah himself, the heathen dead will be consumed. There is a touch of bitterness about these last verses. The writer contemplates, with grim satisfaction, the annihilation of his people's foes.

31:1–4. The theme of this passage is the same as that of 30:1–7.

1. **Woe**: cf. 30:1. The contrast is striking between trust in Egyptian cavalry (cf. 30:16) and trust in God.

2. **He also is wise**, as well as the politicians; they have their plans, he has his. *And his words* — his threats through the prophet Isaiah — *he has not recalled*. **The evil-doers** are the Judæans, **their help** the Egyptians.

3. **The Egyptians . . . spirit**: one of the most remarkable

And when the LORD shall stretch out his hand,
Both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is holpen shall fall,
And they all shall fail together.

4. For thus saith the LORD unto me,
Like as when the lion growleth,
And the young lion over his prey,
If a multitude of shepherds
Be called forth against him,
He will not be dismayed at their voice,
Nor abase himself for the noise of them:
So shall the LORD of hosts come down
To fight [1] upon mount Zion, and [1] upon the hill thereof.

THE ENEMY'S DOWNFALL (31:5–9)

5. As birds flying,
So will the LORD of hosts protect Jerusalem;

[1] m. *against.*

statements in the Old Testament. The contrast between God and man, the spiritual and the material, could not be more absolutely stated. God is one, history is the arena for the exhibition of his victorious purpose, he and his *spiritual* order must be triumphant. He has but to *stretch out his* omnipotent *hand*, and all human might is laid low.

4. **Like as when the lion growleth**, etc. This is an altogether glorious simile, and as daring as it is glorious, when the last clause is correctly translated; *so shall Jehovah of Hosts come down to fight against* (not *upon*) *mount Zion*. Like a lion, Jehovah will hold Jerusalem in his terrible grasp — the allusion is to the Assyrian siege — and all the clamor of the shepherds (the Egyptian allies) will be powerless to scare him away.

31:5–9. This passage is a foil to the last, as 30:27–33 was to 30:1–17, and probably comes from a later age.

5. The contrast between the divine Defender of vs. 5 and the

He will protect it and deliver *it*
He will pass over and preserve *it*.
6. Turn ye unto him from whom [1] ye have deeply re-
7. volted, O children of Israel. For in that day they shall cast away every man his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you [2] for a sin.
8. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of man;
And the sword, not of men, shall devour him:
And he shall flee from the sword,
And his young men shall become tributary.
9. And his rock shall pass away by reason of terror,
And his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign,
Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion,
And his furnace in Jerusalem.

[1] m. *from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.* [2] Gr. om.

roaring Lion of vs. 4 is so startling as to justify the belief that the original form of the verse may have been modified. After the phrase *like fluttering birds*, the words that follow, as Marti suggests, may once have been something like — *the boastful defenders* (the "wise" politicians and their Egyptian allies) *will flee away*. As the verse now stands, **pass over** recalls the passover and the deliverance from Egypt (Exod. 12:13).

6 f. are a call to repentance, which involves the abolition of idolatry (cf. 30:22 and 2:20).

8. The Assyrian is to perish in some *supernatural* way, and **his young men** *shall be put to taskwork.*

9. **His rock**, etc. This clause, which is obscure, means either (*a*) *he shall flee past his rock* (that is, his refuge) *for terror;* or (*b*) *his rock* (that is, the troops on which he relied) *will pass* (*i.e.* vanish) like the chaff (cf. 29:5) *in terror.* **And his princes** or *officers shall flee in dismay from the standard.* The **fire** and the **furnace** probably refer to the pyre prepared for the enemy (30:33).

Rulers and People in the Coming Days (32:1–8)

32. Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness,
And princes shall rule in judgement.
2. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind,
And a covert from the tempest;
As rivers of water in [1] a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.
3. [2] And the eyes of them that see shall not be [3] dim,
And the ears of them that hear shall hearken.
4. The heart also of the [4] rash shall understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.
5. The [5] vile person shall no more be called [6] liberal,
Nor the churl said to be bountiful.

[1] Gr. *Zion.* [2] Gr. *and they shall no more put confidence in men.* [3] m. *closed.* [4] Heb. *hasty.* [5] m. SV *fool.* [6] m. SV *noble.*

Chap. 32. This chapter, whether Isaiah's or not, presents, except in vss. 9–14, a fine picture of the blessed days to come, in which just government, pure religion, and general prosperity will prevail.

1 f. *The government.* The government, ruling in *justice*, will be a welcome contrast to the corrupt nobility so often alluded to in Chaps. 28–31. **A man**, *i.e. each* man, each *ruler*, will be a source of protection and comfort to those in danger or distress. The political leaders will be men of character, strong and just.

The People (vss. 3–5). 3 f. **Dim**: read with margin, *closed*. In the people there will be religious responsiveness, in place of their former callousness (6:10; 29:9). *Rashness* will give place to *wise* and careful deliberation; and decisions, when reached, will be expressed in language *clear* and *ready*.

5. Things and people will be called by their right names — a nobleman must be a noble man, and a gentleman a gentle man. These great words must not be applied to aristocrats and others who do not deserve them. *The fool* who ignores God (cf. Ps. 14:1) *shall no more be called noble, nor the fraudulent* successful man *any more named fortunate* (cf. G. A. Smith).

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6. For the vile person will speak villany,
And his heart will [1] work iniquity,
To practise profaneness,
And to utter error against the LORD,
To make empty the soul of the hungry,
And to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
7. The instruments also of the churl are evil:
He deviseth wicked devices
To destroy the [2] meek with lying words,
Even when the needy speaketh right.
8. But the liberal deviseth liberal things;
And [3] in liberal things shall he continue.

WARNING TO THE WOMEN (32:9–14)

9. Rise up, ye women that are at ease,
And hear my voice;
Ye [4] careless daughters,
Give ear unto my speech.
10. For days beyond a year
Shall ye be troubled, ye careless women:

[1] Gr. Tar. *devise.* [2] m. *poor.* [3] m. *by liberal things shall he stand.* [4] Heb. *confident.*

6–8 is a little excursus, in the style of the proverbs, on the *fool* and the *fraudulent* (or *knave*). What we have in vss. 6 f. is a description of the practical atheist (*fool*) whose irreligion leads him to cruelty, injustice — in brief, to immorality. In contrast with him is the *noble* man (vs. 8) who backs up noble intentions by noble deeds.

32:9–14. This warning and announcement of doom, which interrupts the description of the coming days, recalls 3:16–4:1. Here, as there, it is aristocratic women (cf. vs. 14) who are threatened.

9. **Careless** — *confident* (cf. margin) in a bad sense. In its good sense, *confidence* is the very quality for which Isaiah had pled in the great passage 30:15.

10–13. **For days beyond a year**: rather, *in a little* (a few *days*)

For the vintage shall fail,
The ingathering shall not come.
11. Tremble, [1] ye women that are at ease;
Be troubled, ye careless ones:
Strip you, and make you bare,
And gird *sackcloth* upon your loins.
12. They shall smite upon the breasts
For the pleasant fields,
For the fruitful vine
13. Upon the land of my people
Shall come up thorns and briers;
Yea, upon all the houses of joy
In the joyous city:
14. For the palace shall be forsaken;
The populous city shall be deserted;
[2] The hill and the watch-tower shall be dens for ever,
A joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks.

THE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY OF THE COMING DAYS (32:15–20)

15. Until the spirit be poured
Upon us from on high,

[1] Gr. om. [2] m. *Ophel.*

more than a year. The vintage and the fruit would not be gathered, in consequence of the devastation of the land by the enemy. For this devastation, the women are called upon to show every sign of mourning.

14. The reference to the **palace**, and the **hill** (Hebrew *Ophel*, the southeastern spur of mount Zion on which palace and temple stood) shows that the women are aristocrats. Those palatial quarters were doomed to be an everlasting desolation, over which the wild ass would roam.

32:15–20. This Messianic picture is related to the preceding threat against the women, much as 4:2–6 is related to 3:16–4:1,

And the wilderness become a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be counted for a forest.
16. Then [1] judgement shall dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field.
17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace;
And the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever.
18. And my people shall abide in a peaceable habitation,
And in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places,
19. But it shall hail, in the downfall of the forest;
And the city shall be utterly laid low.
20. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters,
That send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.

[1] SV *justice.*

but it connects rather with vss. 1–5 than with 9–14, where the desolation is said to be *forever*, and consequently such a hope as is here held out is excluded. Perhaps **until** was added to connect the two passages.

15. The **spirit** which is **poured from on high** transforms both the land and the people. The *fertile field* is so thick sown with trees as to look like a *forest* (cf. 29:17). The marvellous fruitfulness of the land is a frequent trait in these descriptions (cf. 4:2).

16. *Justice* will reign everywhere, even in the *wilderness*, where lawlessness is wont to prevail (Gen. 16:12).

17. This all-prevailing justice will produce a sense of security, very different from the false security of vs. 9. In the second clause read: *and the effect of justice* shall be *everlasting confidence.*

19. This verse, whose first clause should perhaps read, *And down will come the forest with a downfall*, rather curiously interrupts the context. The *forest* is apparently the hostile world power (cf. 10:33 f.) and the city its capital city (25:2; 26:5); unless the proper place of the verse is after vs. 14, in which case the city would be Jerusalem.

20. Everywhere the land is well-watered (30:25), and the ox and the ass may be sent forth to pasture, with nothing to fear from wild beasts (11:6–8).

This idyllic picture of agricultural peace and prosperity, following upon the establishment of a just government, powerfully

The Present Distress and the Future Glory of Jerusalem (Ch. 33)

The Distress (33 : 1–9)

33. Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled;
And dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee!
When thou hast ceased to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled;
And when thou hast made an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

2. O Lord, be gracious unto us;
We have waited for thee:
Be thou [1] their arm every morning,
Our salvation also in the time of trouble.

[1] Tar. Syr. Vg. *our*.

recalls 11 : 1–8, where the very same sequence is observable (vss. 1–5 and 6–8). The ideal exhibited in this chapter is very attractive. Its background is country life, and its basis is a just government. Character counts for much. The king and his officers are strong, just men, the people are keenly alive to moral distinctions, justice and honor prevail even in the remoter parts of the land, the land itself is a very garden, and even the animals share in the glad sense of security enjoyed by the people.

Chap. 33. With increasing confidence this chapter is being relegated, on the strength of its language and its thought, to the postexilic period, though its precise place there is difficult to determine. Whatever be its origin, it forms a very striking and eloquent conclusion to the group in which it occurs (Chaps. 28–33), summarizing as it does the deep sorrow and the radiant hopes expressed elsewhere in this section.

1. **Woe**: cf. 28 : 1; 29 : 1, etc.

Woe, thou spoiler — thyself not despoiled;
Thou robber, when none has robbed thee.

Who is meant by the *spoiler* and the *robber* will depend upon the date — in any case, some oppressor of Israel; and sure nemesis awaits him.

2. An interjected prayer. **Their** arm; perhaps *our* arm.

3. At the noise of the tumult the peoples are fled;
At the lifting up of thyself the nations are scattered.
4. And your spoil shall be gathered as the caterpillar gathereth:
As locusts leap shall they leap upon it.

5. The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high:
He hath filled Zion with judgement and righteousness.
6. And there shall be stability in thy times, abundance of salvation,
Wisdom and knowledge: the fear of the LORD[1] is his treasure.

7. Behold, their valiant ones cry without:
The ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.
8. The high ways lie waste,
The wayfaring man ceaseth:
He hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities,
He regardeth not man.

9. The land mourneth and languisheth:
Lebanon is ashamed and withereth away:

[1] Gr. *these are the treasures of righteousness.*

3 f. The **tumult** is that of the divine judgment. Jehovah, who has routed and scattered the nations before, can and will do so again. For **your spoil** read simply *spoil*. **Shall be gathered**, *i.e.* by the Jews. **Shall they leap**, *i.e.* the Jews.

5 f. Jehovah, as the transcendent God (**on high**), has made Jerusalem a treasure-house of spiritual blessings — righteousness (cf. 1:26), wisdom, and religion. For **his treasure**, read *its* (*i.e.* Zion's) *treasure*.

7–9. Despite the spiritual glory described (or, as some say, predicted) in 5 f., the present situation is very terrible. The Jews have suffered in some grievous way from the treachery and arrogant cruelty of the foe, and nature is conceived as mourning

Sharon is like [1] a desert :
And Bashan and Carmel shake off *their leaves*.

The Deliverance (33 : 10–24)

10. "Now will I arise," saith the LORD ;
"Now will I lift up myself ; now will I be exalted.
11. Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble :
Your breath is a fire that shall devour you.

12. And the peoples shall be as the burnings of lime :
As thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.
13. [2] Hear, ye that are afar off, what I have done ;
And, ye that are near, acknowledge my might."

14. The sinners in Zion are afraid ;
Trembling hath surprised the godless ones.
"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire ?
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings ?

[1] m. *the Arabah*. [2] Gr. *they that are afar off shall hear . . . and they that are near shall acknowledge.*

in sympathy (cf. 24 : 4). **Sharon**, the plain between Carmel and Joppa. **Bashan** (north of Gilead) and mount **Carmel**, *i.e.* the trees in Bashan and on Carmel.

10–12. Jehovah's answer to the lament in vss. 7–9. **Now**, three times — emphatic ; deliverance is very near. Vs. 11 pictorially describes the ultimate futility of the efforts of the foe — the last clause perhaps reading *my breath shall devour you like fire*, which will burn them as if to *lime* (vs. 12).

13, 14a. This signal judgment will astonish the whole world, and terrify **the sinners in Zion**, *i.e.* the unfaithful Jews. Read (with the Greek version) :

Those that are afar off shall hear what I have done,
And those that are near shall acknowledge my might.

14b. **Who among us shall dwell**, etc. : the terrified cry of the *sinners in Zion*, as they watch the impending judgment. The **devouring fire** and **everlasting burnings** indicate the presence of

15. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly,
He that despiseth the gain of oppressions,
That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes,
That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood,
And shutteth his ears from looking upon evil:
16. He shall dwell on high:
His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks:
His bread shall be given *him;* his waters shall be sure.

17. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty:
They shall behold [1] a far stretching land.
18. Thine heart shall muse on the terror:
Where is he that counted, where is he that weighed *the tribute?*

[1] Heb. *a land of far distances.*

Jehovah, who appears in fire (Deut. 5 : 24–26), protecting the faithful (Isa. 4 : 5) and destroying the wicked.

15 f. The elaborate answer to the question in vs. 14 powerfully recalls the description of the good man in Pss. 15 and 24. Though more vigorous than those psalms, it is no doubt modelled on them, and probably in its original form contained only the first two clauses. The man who **walketh righteously** and **speaketh uprightly** is compared to one who is safe within a high rock fortress, inaccessible and well-provisioned. The assailants, the judgment, cannot touch or terrify him.

17. Of those glorious days, the **king** (whether the Messianic king, or, as in vs. 22, Jehovah himself) and the **far-stretching land** (recalling in its extent the ancient Davidic kingdom) are necessary features.

18. **The terror**, that is now forever past and nothing but a memory, was the sight of the hated foreign tyrant, who **counted** and **weighed** the tribute which unhappy Jerusalem, in her subjection, had to pay into his hands. **Where is he that counted the towers**? apparently with a view to attack. But, as this is not very satisfactory in the context, Cheyne has emended the verse to mean: *Where are the tablet-writers? Where are the measuring clerks?*

Where is he that counted the towers?
19. Thou shalt not see the fierce people,
A people of a deep speech that thou canst not perceive;
Of a strange tongue that thou canst not understand.

20. Look upon Zion, the city of our [1] solemnities:
Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem
A quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed,
The stakes whereof shall never be plucked up,
Neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

21. [2] But there the LORD will be with us in majesty,
A place of broad rivers and streams;
Wherein shall go no galley with oars,
Neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.

22. For the LORD is our judge,
The LORD is our lawgiver,

---

[1] m. *set feasts.* [2] Gr. *for the name of the Lord is great to you; ye shall have a place,* even *rivers and broad and spacious channels. Thou shalt not go this way, neither shall* a *vessel with oars pass by.*

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19. The insolent foreign oppressors, with their unintelligible jargon, would be seen no more.

20. Jerusalem would henceforth enjoy permanent security, never again being compelled to travel into exile; not like a tent that is taken down and moved, but a city that abides (Heb. 11:9 f.).

21. There is a magnificent haunting music about the English words of this verse, though the Hebrew appears to need some slight emendation, and the precise meaning of the latter half of the verse is not certain. The general sense, however, is clear. The unseen *river* of Jehovah, whose praises are so splendidly sung in Ps. 46, is the real defence of Jerusalem, mightier far than the broad streams, for example, of the Tigris and Euphrates (cf. Isa. 8:6 f.). Perhaps the first two clauses originally ran somewhat as follows:

There we shall have the river of Jehovah,
A (or *in*) *place of broad encompassing streams.*
(Cheyne.)

The LORD is our King;
He will save us.

23. Thy tacklings are loosed;
They could not strengthen the foot of their mast,
They could not spread the sail.

Then was the prey of a great spoil divided;
The lame took the prey.
24. And the inhabitant shall not say, "I am sick";
The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

The passage forcibly recalls Ezek. 47 : 1–12; in that case Jehovah's river may itself be *a* place of broad streams. Or the meaning may be that this gentle stream (Isa. 8 : 6) is *in* place of the broad streams of other earthly rivers. In it no ships will be seen. *Jehovah is our king*, HE *will save us* (vss. 22); and such a people needs not the defence of warships.

23 f. **Thy tacklings . . . the sail.** These three clauses, describing a helpless ship upon the sea, appear to have crept in, under the influence of the imagery in vs. 21, from some other source. **Then . . . prey.** These clauses, which should perhaps read:

Then will the blind divide spoil in abundance,
And the lame seize the prey,

reaffirm the hope of vs. 4. *Saved* by Jehovah (vs. 22), the Jews will be triumphant, healed, and forgiven.

THE GOLDEN AGE (Chaps. 34, 35)

THE DAY OF VENGEANCE (Chap. 34) 34:2

The Destruction of the Nations (34 : 1–4)

34. Come near, ye nations, to hear;
And hearken, ye peoples:
Let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and all things that come forth of it.

2. For the LORD hath indignation against all the nations,
And fury against all their host:
He hath [1] utterly destroyed them,
He hath delivered them to the slaughter.

[1] Heb. *put them under the ban.*

Chaps. 34 and 35. These brilliant chapters, exuberant alike in their hatred of Edom and in their affection for Judah, were probably set here as a fitting conclusion to the first great section of the book of Isaiah (Chaps. 1–35). The passage may be very late, and in any case must be post-exilic, as it shows dependence upon the latter half of the book of Isaiah (40 ff.), and also upon Chaps. 13 f. In spite, however, of its literary dependence, it is written with an impetuosity and a glow which have few parallels in prophecy.

Chap. 34. Here, as frequently, though not always, in the Old Testament, the golden age has two aspects: it involves not only the happiness of the Jews, but also the complete destruction of all that is opposed to Zion. Of the hostile nations Edom was the most detested, and upon her most of the writer's passionate hatred is poured.

1 f. The **nations** are summoned to their destruction, and no reason is assigned for the divine indignation. It is enough that the world as a whole is conceived as hostile to Judah, and all that Judah stands for; no doubt bitter historical experiences lie behind such a conception. The **fulness** of the earth, and **all things that come forth of it**, are phrases for the *men* upon it.

3. Their slain also shall be cast out,
And the stink of their carcasses shall come up,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
4. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved.

And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll:
And all their host shall fade away,
As the leaf fadeth from off the vine,
And as a fading *leaf* from the fig tree.

The Destruction of Edom (34:5–17)

5. For my sword hath drunk
Its fill in heaven:

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3 f. Slain, they will lie unburied. It is a gruesome picture — smelling corpses, and mountains drenched with blood. The first clause of vs. 4 should probably parallel the last clause of vs. 3, thus:

The mountains shall melt with their blood,
And all the hills shall dissolve.

The heavens shall be rolled, etc.: the physical world is involved in the catastrophe (cf. 24:19 f.).

34:5–17. The hatred of the foreign world, with which the first four verses are charged, concentrates itself upon Edom. The feud between Edom and Israel was of very ancient origin (cf. Gen. 25:22–26), but it was raised to fever heat by Edom's cruel treatment of Israel when Jerusalem fell and her people were taken into exile (Ezek. 25:12; Ps. 137) — cruelty which Israel never forgot or forgave; and the hostility was fomented by subsequent Edomite encroachments upon Judæan territory. These facts help to explain the bitterness of this passage and the almost fierce delight with which the writer contemplates the ruin of Edom.

5. The vs. should perhaps run:

For already drunk with his wrath
Is the sword of Jehovah in heaven,
Behold, it descends upon Edom,
For judgment — upon the folk of his ban.

For the *ban*, cf. Deut. 3:6.

Behold, it shall come down upon Edom,
And upon the people of my [1] curse, to judgement.

6. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood,
It is made fat with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams:

For the LORD hath a sacrifice in [2] Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
7. And the wild-oxen shall [3] come down with them,
And the bullocks with the bulls;

And their land shall be drunken with blood,
And their dust made fat with fatness.
8. For it is the day of the LORD's vengeance,
The year of recompence in the controversy of Zion.

9. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch,
And the dust thereof into brimstone,
And the land thereof
Shall become burning pitch.

10. It shall not be quenched night nor day;
The smoke thereof shall go up for ever: Rev. 19:3
From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
None shall pass through it for ever and ever.

[2] Heb. *ban.* [3] Gr. *Bosor.* [4] Gr. *fall down.*

6 f. The Edomites are compared to sacrificial animals, the animals of vs. 6 representing the common people, those of vs. 7 the leaders. **Bozrah**, one of Edom's chief cities.

9 f. A fearful picture — Edom will be a sort of hell. The imagery recalls the story of Sodom (Gen. 19: 24 f.).

11. But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it;
And the owl and the raven shall dwell therein:
And he shall stretch over it
The line of confusion and the [1] plummet of emptiness.

12. [2] They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom,
But none shall be there;
And all her princes shall be nothing.

13. And thorns shall come up in her palaces,
Nettles and thistles in the fortresses thereof:
And it shall be an habitation of jackals,
A court for ostriches,

14. And the wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the [3] wolves,
Rev. 18:2 And the [4] satyr shall cry to his fellow;
Yea, [5] the night monster shall settle there,
And shall find her a place of rest.

[1] Heb. *stones.* [2] m. *as for her nobles, none shall be there to proclaim the kingdom;* Gr. *satyrs shall dwell therein, her rulers shall be no more, for her kings and her great men hall be destroyed.* [3] Heb. *howling creatures.* [4] m. *he-goat;* SV *wild goat.* [5] Heb. *Lilith.*

11. With this picture of the fiery land, the following vss., describing the desolation of Edom are, strictly speaking, inconsistent. They combine to intensify the horror of Edom's fate. **Confusion** and **emptiness** are the words used in Gen. 1:2 to describe primeval chaos. The words **line** and **plummet** (lit. *stones*), strictly applicable to building, are here used to suggest the inexorable thoroughness of the destruction.

12. This verse, which is metrically defective, may thus be restored with the help of the Greek version:

Satyrs shall dwell therein,
Its nobles shall be no more;
There will be no kingdom there to proclaim,
And all its princes shall pass away.

13. Cf. 13:21 f.

14. **Satyr**, a demon in the form of a *wild goat* (cf. SV). **The**

15. There shall the arrowsnake make her nest, and lay,
And hatch, and gather under her shadow;
Yea, there shall the kites be gathered,
Every one with her mate.

16. Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read:
No one of these shall be missing,
None shall want her mate:
For [1] my mouth it hath commanded,
And his spirit it hath gathered them.

17. And he hath cast the lot for them,
And his hand hath divided it unto them by line:
They shall possess it for ever,
From generation to generation shall they dwell therein.

THE JOY OF THE REDEEMED (Ch. 35)

35. The wilderness and [2] the solitary place shall be glad;
And the desert shall rejoice and blossom.

[1] Gr. *the Lord.* [2] m. *parched land.*

night-monster, *Lilith*, a demon of the night, which was supposed to persecute sleepers, slay children, etc.

15. For **gather under her shadow,** read *brood over her eggs* (Duhm).

16. **The Book of Jehovah,** if it does not point to a large and practical canonical collection of prophecies, appears at least to include the first section of Isaiah (Chaps. 1–35), of which this oracle on Edom forms a part. The writer virtually means that the time will come when all that is predicted for Edom will have been demonstrably fulfilled. For **my mouth,** read *the mouth of Jehovah.* Omit *none shall want her mate*, which appears to be but a variant to vs. 15d.

17. Jehovah had assigned Edom to those weird animals as surely and deliberately as he had once assigned Canaan to Israel.

As the [1] rose it shall blossom abundantly,
And rejoice even with joy and singing.

2. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it,
The excellency of Carmel and Sharon:
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.

3. Strengthen ye the weak hands,
Heb. 12:12 And confirm the feeble knees.
4. Say to them that are of a [2] fearful heart,
Be strong, fear not:

Behold, your God
Will come *with* vengeance,
With the recompence of God;
He will come and save you.

5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
6. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart,
And the tongue of the dumb shall sing:

For in the wilderness shall waters break out,
And streams in the desert.

[1] m. *autumn crocus.* [2] Heb. *hasty.*

Chap. 35. Against the destruction of the nations and the desolation of Edom, the joy of Judah stands out the more conspicuous and radiant.

1 f. Nature will be transformed. The **rose** — some pretty meadow flower, seen on the plains of Sharon (33:9; Song 2:1). **They shall see**: *they*, the despondent Jews addressed in vss. 3f.

3 f. The despondent are encouraged; the *avenging* God (34:8) will assuredly come.

5 f. **The blind**: the transformation in men will be not only spiritual (cf. 3 f.) but physical (cf. Mat. 11:5).

7. And the [1] glowing sand shall become a pool,
And the thirsty ground springs of water.

[2] In the habitation of jackals, where they lay,
Shall be [3] grass with reeds and rushes.

8. [4] And a high way shall be there, and a way,
And it shall be called The Way of Holiness;
The unclean shall not pass over it;
[5] But it shall be for those: the wayfaring men,
Yea, fools shall not err *therein.*

9. No lion shall be there,
Nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon,
They shall not be found there;
But the redeemed shall walk *there:*
10. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,

[1] m. *mirage.* [2] Gr. *there shall be the joy of birds.* [3] m. Gr. *a court for*, cf. 34:13. [4] Gr. *a pure highway shall be there.* [5] Gr. *no unclean way shall be there, but the dispersed shall walk upon it, and they shall not go astray.*

7. Again the transformation of nature (cf. 1 f.). The last half of the verse, which is defective, has been restored as follows:

In the haunt of jackals and hyænas,
Your herds shall rest:
And the court for ostriches
Will be filled with reeds and rushes.

8 f. **And a highway . . . and a way**: the Greek version reads, perhaps correctly, *and a pure highway shall be there.* This is the way that leads to Zion, and upon it the faithful pilgrims travel. The clause, **but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men**, has every appearance in the Hebrew of being a gloss, and should be deleted. The **fools** are the godless (cf. Ps. 14:1); they must *err* (cf. 32:6), wander elsewhere; this *holy* way is not for them, it is for **the redeemed**.

10. By this way **the redeemed** and **ransomed of Jehovah** will **return** to Zion — there to abide — from the foreign lands in which

And come with singing unto Zion;
And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads:
They shall obtain gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

they had been scattered. **Upon their heads**: some ornament must have been worn on the head as a symbol of gladness. For **they shall obtain**, etc., read *joy and gladness shall overtake them.* While *sorrow flees* from them, *joy* runs up and *overtakes them* — a striking and beautiful contrast.

This chapter constitutes the brilliant climax of the first great division of the book of Isaiah. It is the outpouring of the heart of one who was at once patriot and poet; and, in the golden days to which he looked forward from out a too sorrowful present, he saw the desolations of nature and the pains and sorrows of humanity transformed, with Zion as the capital of the world, and the road that led to her trod by the happy feet of pilgrims and of the redeemed.

HISTORICAL APPENDIX (Chaps. 36–39)

Isaiah encourages Hezekiah to resist Sennacherib's Summons to surrender Jerusalem (Chaps. 36 f.) 36:1

First Narrative (36:1–37:9 a, 37 f.)

36. Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

Chaps. 36–39. The stories of Elijah and Elisha and other briefer sections in the book of Kings show that from comparatively early times the profoundest interest was taken in the careers of the prophets, and narratives which illustrated their power and influence were faithfully gathered and lovingly cherished. It is to this impulse that these chapters of Isaiah are due. In them interest is divided between Hezekiah and Isaiah, but the king is, as it were, a foil to the prophet. When his heart, like that of his father Ahaz about thirty-five years before, was swayed like the forest trees before the wind (7:2) by fear of an impending invasion, now, as then, it is Isaiah who speaks the steadying word (36 f.). It is he who announces to the sick king the welcome news that his life will be prolonged (Chap. 38) and who afterwards foretells to him the exile (Chap. 39).

Except for the omission of the story of Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:14–16) and the addition of the song of thanksgiving on his recovery from sickness (Isa. 38:9–20), these chapters (36–39) simply repeat, occasionally in a slightly abbreviated form, the narrative of 2 Kings 18:13–20:19.

Chaps. 36 and 37. Every one who reads these two chapters attentively must have been struck by the seeming repetitions in the story they tell. Two attempts are made by Sennacherib to induce Hezekiah to surrender Jerusalem. First an Assyrian deputation comes, which discusses the matter orally; in the second case a letter is sent, but its terms closely resemble the words of the deputation. Both times Hezekiah is thrown into consternation, and both times he is heartened by the word of Isaiah. The probable explanation of these facts is that we have here not two narra-

2. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish
to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army.
And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the
3. high way of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto
him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the
household, and Shebna the [1] scribe, and Joah the son
of Asaph the [2] recorder.
4. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to
Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of
Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou

[1] m. *secretary.* [2] m. *chronicler.*

tives of different events, but two parallel narratives of the same event, which, while they differ somewhat in detail, agree in the main fact that, in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah, Sennacherib was compelled to withdraw from Judah without capturing Jerusalem. There are several indications that both narratives are late.

The Assyrian Challenge (vss. 1–3)

1. **In the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah**. The year intended is unquestionably 701 B.C. The number *fourteenth* appears to be reached artificially, by deducting the fifteen years by which 38 : 5 states that his life was prolonged from the twenty-nine years which covered his reign (2 Kings 18 : 2). **All the fenced cities**: Sennacherib claims to have taken forty-six.

2. **Rabshakeh**, a title, *the* Rabshakeh. **Lachish**, now Tell-el-Hesy, an important Judæan fortress, southwest of Jerusalem, commanding the road from Egypt. **The conduit of the upper pool**, where Isaiah had gone out to meet Ahaz, thirty-five years before (7 : 3). It is interesting to find faith twice challenged on the same spot — by the incredulity of the Hebrew Ahaz, and a generation after, by the insolence of the Assyrian Rabshakeh.

3. **Eliakim** and **Shebna**: cf. 22 : 15–23. **Scribe**: *secretary* (cf. margin). **Recorder**: lit. *remembrancer*, probably the officer whose duty it was to bring important business before the king.

The Rabshakeh's Speech (vss. 4–10)

There are three possible sources of *confidence* for Hezekiah — all, according to this clever diplomat, equally futile: Egypt, Jehovah, and the Judæan soldiery.

5. trustest? I say, *thy* counsel and strength for the
war are but vain words: now on whom dost thou
6. trust, that thou hast rebelled against me? Behold,
thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed,
even upon Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go
into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of
7. Egypt to all that trust on him. But if thou say unto
me, We trust in the LORD our God: is not that he,
whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath
taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem,
8. Ye shall worship before this altar? Now therefore,
I pray thee, [1] give pledges to my master the king of
Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses,
if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.
9. How then canst thou turn away the face of one captain
of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust
10. on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And am
I now come up without the LORD against this land

[1] m. *make a wager with.*

5. **I say**, etc.: read *Thinkest thou* (second person) *that a mere word of the lips is counsel and strength for war?*

6. Egyptian help is futile (cf. 30:1 ff.; 31:1–3).

7. Hezekiah's attempt to "remove the high places" (2 Kings 18:4) and to concentrate worship in Jerusalem **before this altar** of the temple would seem to the heathen diplomat to be equivalent to the disestablishment of religion in the provinces, so that Jehovah could not be expected to help such a people.

8. **Give pledges to**: read with margin, *make a wager with.* Neither Egypt nor Jehovah would help the people of Judah; nor, with their deficiency in cavalry (30:16), could they effectively help themselves.

9. **Turn away the face**, *i.e.* repel the onset. How shall Hezekiah assail the great king, when he is not even a match for a subordinate Assyrian official?

10. **Against this land**, better, *place* (so 2 Kings 18:25), *i.e.* Jerusalem. **The LORD said unto me**: the claim that the Assyrian

to destroy it? The LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

11. Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the [1] Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the
12. people that are on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men that sit upon the wall, to eat their own dung, and to drink their own water with you?
13. Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words
14. of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall
15. not be able to deliver you: neither let Hezekiah make

[1] Heb. *Aramean.*

advance upon Jerusalem is in obedience to an oracle of *Jehovah* is a very remarkable one. The Rabshakeh, who is familiar with Hebrew (vs. 13), may conceivably have known something of oracles of Isaiah, which assigned to Assyria the duty of chastising Judah (cf. 10:5 ff.); more probably it was simply a fabrication designed to terrify Judah.

The Rabshakeh's Taunt (vss. 11 f.)

11. **In the Syrian language**, *in Aramaic*, which was the international language throughout western Asia, and therefore familiar alike to Assyrian and Hebrew officials.

12. **With you.** The coarse and insolent words simply mean that so long as the people are led by Hezekiah and his officials, they have nothing to expect but starvation fare (cf. 2 Chr. 32:11). Contrast vs. 16.

The Rabshakeh's Fruitless Appeal to the People (vss. 13–22)

Throughout this speech, the Rabshakeh deliberately refrains from calling Hezekiah king.

you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand
16. of the king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, [1] Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye
17. every one the waters of his own cistern: until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.
18. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?
19. Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered
20. Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of these countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver
21. Jerusalem out of my hand? But they held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's
22. commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, that was over the

[1] Heb. *Make with me a blessing.*

16 f. **Make your peace**: *make a blessing* (cf. margin) — *i.e.* be on terms of greeting, on friendly footing. **Come out**, surrender. Immediate surrender will mean that agricultural operations, suspended by the blockade, may be at once resumed; though the people are cynically reminded that their ultimate fate will be deportation.

18–20. Jehovah will prove no more able to save his people than other gods to save their peoples. **Hamath** and **Arpad**: cf. 10:9. **Sepharvaim**, perhaps Sibraim, between Hamath and Damascus (Ezek. 47:16). In reality **Samaria** had been taken (721 B.C.) by Sargon, not by Sennacherib. With vss. 18–20 cf. 10:5–11.

21. **They held their peace**, *i.e.* the people on the wall (2 Kings 18:36). The delegates no doubt returned some formal answer.

household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

37. And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sack-
2. cloth, and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.
3. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of contumely: for the children are come to the birth, and
4. there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift
5. up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. So the
6. servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And

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22. **Clothes rent**, sign of grief.

Hezekiah's Appeal to Isaiah; Isaiah's Answer (37 : 1–9a)

1. **Sackcloth**, sign of mourning (cf. 36 : 22).

2. **Unto Isaiah**: prophets were frequently consulted in times of public distress (cf. 2 Kings 22 : 12 ff.; Jer. 37 : 3). They were believed to stand specially near their God (cf. vs. 4, Jehovah *thy* God; and Amos 3 : 7).

3. Here Hezekiah implicitly acknowledges the futility of his Egyptian policy (31 : 1 ff.), which has but brought him *distress, chastisement, and rejection*. **The children**, etc.: the crisis is grave, and there is no strength to cope with it.

4. **Lift up thy prayer**: intercessory prayer, especially of prophetic men, "availeth much" (Gen. 20 : 7; Jer. 18 : 20; Job 42 : 8; James 5 : 16).

6. Isaiah has his inspired answer ready. He and the Rabshakeh are representatives of Faith and Force.

Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master,
Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that
thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king
7. of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put
a spirit in him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall
return unto his own land; and I will cause him to
fall by the sword in his own land.
8. So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of
Assyria warring against Libnah: for he had heard that
9. he was departed from Lachish. And he heard say
concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come out
to fight against thee. And when he heard it . . .

Second Narrative (37:9-36), *including the Taunt Song* (37:22-29)

10. He sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye
speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy

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7. **A spirit**, the spirit of fear. The **rumor** is of the advance of Tirhakah (vs. 9). **To fall by the sword**: the implication is that he was murdered soon after his return (cf. vs. 38). As a matter of fact, this did not take place till twenty years after, in 681 B.C.

8. **Libnah** appears to be the seat of the Assyrian army in the second story, as Lachish in the first, and the words **warring . . . Lachish** serve the purpose of binding the stories together.

9a is followed by vss. 37 f. which show how Sennacherib met his end, in fulfilment of the prediction in vs. 7.

37:9–36. This second narrative, which assigns Sennacherib's departure from Judah not to a rumor, but to the mysterious destruction of an immense contingent of the Assyrian host (vs. 36), is interrupted (*a*) by a taunt song (vss. 22–29), which declares that the Assyrian will be led back to his own land like a wild beast that is captured and mastered, and (*b*) by a sign (vss. 30–32), which announces for the very near future the dawn of the better day to be.

The Letter (vss. 9b–13)

The letter (cf. vs. 14) is in the same strain as the speech of the deputation in Chap. 36, and appears to be not a subsequent

God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying,
Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king
11. of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings
of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them
12. utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods
of the nations delivered them, which my fathers have
destroyed, Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the
13. children of Eden which were in Telassar? Where
is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the
king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah?
14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of
the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up
unto the house of the LORD, and spread it before the
15. LORD. And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,
16. O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, that [1] sittest upon
the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all
the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven

[1] m. *dwellest between;* SV *sittest* above; SV m. *art enthroned* above.

incident, but a parallel account of the same incident. The letter could not be expected to effect what the speech had failed to effect.

10. **Let not thy God deceive thee**: in 36:14 Hezekiah is the deceiver.

12. **Fathers** = predecessors. **Gozan** and **Haran**, in Mesopotamia. **Rezeph**, near the Euphrates, midway between Palmyra and Haran. **The children of Eden**, Bit Adini, a district on the Upper Euphrates north of Rezeph. **Telassar**, not identified, but doubtless in the same neighborhood.

Hezekiah's Prayer (vss. 14–20)

14. **Spread it before Jehovah** — a curious and interesting touch, as if the sight of the insolent letter would provoke the indignation and vengeance of Jehovah.

16. **That sittest upon**, *throned upon*. **The cherubim**, figures with outstretched wings above the ark (1 Kings 8:6 f.). The creative power (cf. Ps. 121:2), divinity, and sovereignty of Jehovah are

17. and earth. Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open
thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words
of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the
18. living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria
19. have laid waste all the [1] countries, and their land, and
have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no
gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone;
20. therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore,
O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the
kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the
LORD, even thou only.
21. Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah,
saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, [2] Where-
as thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, king
22. of Assyria, this is the word which the LORD hath
spoken concerning him:

[1] 2 Kings 19:15, *nations*. [2] Gr. *I have heard thy prayer*.

appropriately emphasized in the opening words of the prayer, as the Assyrian letter had insinuated his impotence.

18. **Countries**: read *nations* (so 2 Kings 19:17).

20. The last clause should read, as 2 Kings 19:19 (margin), *that thou, Jehovah, art God alone*. The deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib would be conclusive proof of Jehovah's sole divinity.

Isaiah's Reply (vss. 21, 33–35)

21. Isaiah has a mysterious knowledge of Hezekiah's prayer, and at once announces the divine answer, which is given in vss. 33–35. In our present text, the sequence between the prayer and the answer is interrupted by *the taunt song* (vss. 22–29) and *the sign* (vss. 30–32).

The Taunt Song (vss. 22–29)

This is a striking and powerful poem. The arrogant might of the Assyrian is vividly portrayed in vss. 24 f., 27, only to be thrown against the invincible omnipotence of Jehovah, who leads him

The virgin daughter of Zion
Hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Hath shaken her head [1] at thee.

23. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?
And against whom hast thou exalted thy voice
And lifted up thine eyes on high?
Even against the Holy One of Israel.

24. By thy [2] servants hast thou reproached
The Lord, and hast said,
"With the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains,
To the innermost parts of Lebanon;
And I will cut down the tall cedars thereof,
And the choice fir trees thereof;
And I will enter into [3] his [4] farthest height,
The forest of [3] his fruitful field.

25. I have digged and drunk
[5] Water,
And with the sole of my feet will I dry up
All the rivers of Egypt."

[1] Heb. *after*. [2] 2 Kings 19:23, *messengers*. [3] SV *its*. [4] 2 Kings 19:23, *lodging place*. [5] 2 Kings 19:24, *strange waters*.

away, like the wild beast that he is, with a ring through his nose, amid the derisive shouts of the people whom he had despised and insulted.

22. **The virgin**: Jerusalem, the inviolate. **Hath shaken her head** in mockery.

24. He can do what is impossible for others — traverse with his chariots the lofty mountains; and their forests yield him timber. Read *I go up, I cut down*, etc. Such experiences are frequent. **His furthest height**: read *its furthest retreat* (2 Kings 19:23).

25. **Waters**: read *strange waters* (so 2 Kings 19:24). The meaning is that he never allowed his course to be impeded either by lack of water or by floods.

26. Hast thou not heard how I have done it
Long ago;
And formed it of ancient times?
Now have I brought it to pass,
That thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities
Into ruinous heaps.
27. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power,
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops, and as a[1] field *of corn* before it be grown up.
28. But I know thy sitting down,
And thy going out, and thy coming in,
29. And thy raging against me. Because of thy raging against me, and for that thine arrogancy
Is come up into mine ears,
Therefore will I put my hook in thy nose,
And my bridle in thy lips,

[1] 2 Kings 19:26, *corn* (SV *grain*).

26. Sennacherib's destructive activity has been in accordance with Jehovah's ancient purpose (10:5–7). The verse recalls passages in the latter part of Isaiah (cf. 40:28; 45:21).

27 f. **As grass**, cut down or trampled with ease. **Before it be grown up**: this clause, emended, seems to go with the next verse, so that the whole would read:

Before me is thine uprising and thy downsitting (Ps. 139:2),
Thy going out and coming in I know,
And thy turbulent raging against me
And thy tumult have come up into my ears.

The third line has been inadvertently repeated.

29. The figure of the roaring, raging beast, dragged back against its will, with a ring through its nose, is a very striking symbol for the humiliating departure of the powerful and haughty Assyrian.

And I will turn thee back by the way
By which thou camest.

30. And this shall be the sign unto thee:
Ye shall eat this year that which groweth of itself,
And in the second year that which springeth of the same;
And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.
31. And the remnant that is escaped out of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.
32. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
And out of mount Zion they that shall escape:
The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this.

33. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria,
"He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Neither shall he come before it with shield,
Nor cast a mound against it.

The Sign (vss. 30–32)

30. Agricultural operations, which had been suspended by the presence of the Assyrians in the land, would be resumed in less than two years. The fulfilment of this sign would be proof that Jehovah had foreseen all the circumstances of the deliverance, and accurately foretold them by his prophet.

31 f. Deliverance from the Assyrians is but the prelude to an era of stability and fruitfulness for Judah, and Jehovah is pledged to this (cf. 9:7).

33–35. These verses follow vs. 21, and constitute the divine answer — announced through Isaiah — to Hezekiah's prayer. There is to be no siege of the city. Elsewhere, and earlier, Isaiah

34. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return,
And he shall not come unto this city," saith the LORD.
35. For I will defend this city to save it,
For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

36. And [1] the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

Conclusion of the First Narrative (37 : 37 f.)

37. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went
38. and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead.

[1] 2 Kings 19:35, *it came to pass that night, that . . .*

had announced a very grievous siege (29 : 3). In point of fact, though the city was really blockaded — Hezekiah being shut up "like a bird in a cage" — it was not besieged. With vs. 35, cf. 31 : 5.

36. **The angel**: no doubt pestilence is intended (cf. 2 Sam. 24 : 13, 16), which from time immemorial has been associated with the swampy land northeast of the Nile delta. There is independent evidence in Herodotus that a disaster of some kind overtook the Assyrian army, and his story suggests, though it does not directly assert, that the cause of it was plague. **When men arose**: rather *when they arose*. There is grim humor in this.

37 f. These verses follow vs. 9a, and constitute the conclusion of the first narrative (36 : 1 ff.). They describe how Sennacherib returned to his country, and met his end, in accordance with the prediction in vs. 7.

38. **Nisroch**. No Assyrian god bearing this name is known — perhaps *Nusku*, god of fire. **His sons**: only one son is mentioned in Assyrian sources. **Ararat**, Armenia. **Esar-haddon** reigned 681–668 B.C.

Hezekiah's Sickness, Recovery, and Song of Thanksgiving (Chap. 38)

Hezekiah's Sickness (38:1–8)

38. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house
2. in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the
3. Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good
4. in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. Then came
5. the word of the Lord to Isaiah, saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.
6. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.

38:1–8. The story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (Chap. 38), dealing with the private, as Chaps. 36 f. with the public, life of Hezekiah, illustrates, like those chapters, the high importance of the prophet.

1. **In those days**: a loose phrase — not, in any case, the days of the blockade of Jerusalem round which Chaps. 36 f. turn, but some earlier time. Hezekiah's sickness preceded the embassy from Merodach-Baladan (39:1), which probably fell in 704 B.C.

2. Hezekiah **prayed** as in 37:15, 21.

3. There are several confessions of *integrity* in the Old Testament (cf. Ps. 44:17 f.).

4. The prayer is heard at once (cf. 2 Kings 20:4), and the divine answer communicated, exactly as in 37:21.

6. This verse must be a later insertion (from 37:35), as it only fits the date of the blockade (701 B.C.), which was later than Hezekiah's sickness.

7. And this shall be the sign unto thee from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he hath spoken:
8. behold, I will cause the shadow on the steps, which is gone down on the [1] dial of Ahaz [2] with the sun, to return backward ten steps. So the sun returned ten ten steps on the dial whereon it was gone down.

Hezekiah's Song of Thanksgiving (38:9–20)

9. The [3] writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.
10. I said, "In the [4] noontide of my days
I shall go

[1] Heb. *steps*. [2] m. *by*. [3] Gr. *prayer*. [4] m. *tranquillity;* AV *cutting off*.

7 f. **The sign**, cf. 37:30. In 2 Kings 20:8–11, the miracle of the sign is enhanced by the prophet's offer of a choice to Hezekiah. **Which is gone down . . . with the sun**: read, *which the sun has gone down* (so the Greek version) *on the steps of Ahaz*. Some means of measuring time appear to be implied, though precisely what we do not know; possibly "a pyramid of steps on the top of which stood a short pillar or obelisk" (G. A. Smith), whose shadow, cast by the sun, would fall upon the steps. Ewald makes the interesting suggestion that the story rests, like that in Josh. 10:13 f. on the misunderstanding of a poetical expression. The story may well, however, have some other origin.

38:9–20. There is a certain dramatic propriety in the insertion of such a song at this point, and such an insertion is quite in accordance with the practice of Hebrew historians (cf. Hannah's song in 1 Sam. 2); nevertheless the fact of its being described as **the writing of Hezekiah** (which should, besides, perhaps be the *Michtam* of Hezekiah, cf. the titles of Ps. 56–60) is very far from proving that the song really comes from him, especially when we consider how little historical value attaches to the superscriptions of the so-called "Davidic" psalms. Many of its phrases recall late psalms and the book of Job, and in all probability it is a late composition, taken from a liturgical collection, and sung in public worship (cf. vs. 20).

10. **Noontide**, a difficult word; either *height* (so Gr.) or *even*

Into the gates of [1] the grave: I am deprived
Of the residue of my years."
11. I said,[2] "I shall not see [3] the LORD, *even* [3] the LORD
In the land of the living:
I shall behold man no more
[4] With the inhabitants of the world."

12. Mine [5] age is removed, and is carried away from me
As a shepherd's tent:
I have rolled up like a weaver my life;
He will cut me off from the [6] loom:
From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.
13. I [7] quieted *myself* until morning;
As a lion, so he breaketh
All my bones.
From day even to night
Wilt thou make an end of me.

14. Like a swallow *or* [8] a crane, so did I chatter;
I did mourn as a dove;

[1] Heb. *Sheol.* [2] Gr. *I shall no more at all see the salvation of God in the land of the living; I shall no more at all see the salvation of Israel on the earth: I shall no more at all see man.* [3] Heb. *Jah.* [4] m. when I am *among them that have ceased to be.* [5] m. *habitation;* SV *dwelling.* [6] Heb. *thrum.* [7] m. *I thought* (AV *reckoned*) *until morning, As a lion, so will he break;* Tar. *I cried.* [8] Gr. om.

tenor. **Deprived**: or perhaps — "to the gates of Sheol I am *consigned.*"

11. **The LORD, even the LORD**: read simply *Jehovah* once. To **see Jehovah** is to take part in his worship in the temple (cf. 1: 12). Death is peculiarly bitter because, besides removing a man from *human* fellowship, it deprives him of the privilege of worship (cf. vs. 18).

12. **Age**: read, with margin, *habitation.* **Carried away** as into exile. Death is compared to the moving of the tent, the snapping of the thread. **From day**, etc.: *night and day thou didst deliver me up* (*i.e.* to torment).

13. **I quieted myself**, etc.: read *I cried.* Omit the last sentence of vs. 13 as a repetition of the last sentence of vs. 12.

Mine eyes fail *with looking* upward;
O LORD, I am oppressed, be thou my surety.
15. What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me,
And himself hath done it:
I shall go [1] softly all my years
Because of [2] the bitterness of my soul.

16. [3] O Lord, by these things men live,
And wholly therein is the life of my spirit:
Wherefore recover thou me,
And make me to live.
17. [4] Behold, *it was* for *my* peace
That I had great bitterness:
But [5] thou hast in love to my soul delivered it
From the pit of [6] corruption;

[1] m. *as in solemn procession*, cf. Ps. 42:4. [2] Gr. *mine eyes have failed with looking to the height of the heaven to the Lord* (vs. 14), *who has delivered me and removed the pain of my soul.* [3] Gr. Yea, *O Lord, for it was told thee concerning this; and thou hast awakened my breath, and I am comforted, and live.* [4] Gr. om. *behold . . . bitterness.* [5] Heb. *thou hast loved my soul from the pit;* Gr. *thou hast taken my soul that it should not perish.* [6] m. *nothingness.*

14. Omit *or a crane.* For **chatter** read *twitter.* **Fail with looking upward**: read *look tearfully upward.* **I am oppressed**: read perhaps *care thou for me.*

15. This perplexing verse has thus been emended and rendered by Duhm:

What shall I utter and speak unto him,
Since 'tis he that has done it?
I will restlessly toss all the time of my slumber,
Because of my bitterness of soul.

16. The rendering of AV and RV is quite impossible. With the help of the Greek version, Duhm proposes a text, which reads:

Lord, touching this my heart makes mention to thee,
Refresh thou my spirit, give me health and revive me.

17. **Behold . . . bitterness.** This clause, emphasizing, as nowhere else in the song, the disciplinary effect of the suffering, is omitted, perhaps rightly, in the Greek version. **Thou hast in**

For thou hast cast all my sins
Behind thy back.

18. For[1] the grave cannot praise thee,
Death cannot celebrate thee:
They that go down into the pit
Cannot hope for thy[2] truth.
19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee,
As I do this day:
The father to the children
Shall make known thy truth.
20. The LORD is *ready* to save me:
Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments
All the days of our life
In the house of the LORD.

Hezekiah's Recovery (38:21 f.)

21. Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a cake of figs,
and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall
22. recover." Hezekiah also had said, "What is the sign
that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"

[1] Heb. *Sheol.* [2] Gr. *mercy.*

love . . . : perhaps, *Thou didst keep back my soul from the pit of destruction.* Recovery is the proof and seal of **sin** forgiven.

18 f. Life is peculiarly precious, for only to **the living** is worship possible (cf. vs. 11). The restored man has the duty of acquainting his children with the divine **truth**, *i.e., faithfulness* (cf. Ps. 48:13).

20. Whatever be the origin of the song, it is adapted by this verse to the use of the worshipping community. Read:

Jehovah, be pleased to deliver us,
And stringed music we will play, etc.

21 f. In their present position, these verses are clearly belated,

HEZEKIAH'S VANITY AND ISAIAH'S REBUKE (Chap. 39)

39. At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and [1] a present to Hezekiah: for he heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver,
2. and the gold, and the spices, and the precious oil, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.
3. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said,

[1] Gr. *ambassadors and gifts.*

following as they do the song of thanksgiving for recovery. Particularly so is the reference to the **sign** which, strictly speaking, must precede vss. 7 f. **Lay**, rather *rub*.

39:1. **At that time** — after Hezekiah's recovery. **Merodach-Baladan** gave much trouble to Assyria before he was finally overthrown. He reigned over Babylon from 721 to 710 B.C., when he was driven out by Sargon. On Sargon's death, in 705, he recovered his power, but held it only for a few months. This embassy to Hezekiah (? 704 B.C.), ostensibly to congratulate him on his recovery, had no doubt the deeper political object of securing his help in a revolt against Assyria.

2. **The house of his precious things** — *his treasure house.* The **silver** and **gold** which fill the treasure house show that the period covered by Chaps. 38 f. must be earlier than 36 f., when the treasury was depleted (2 Kings 18:14–16; cf. Isa. 38:1). **The house of his armor** — the armory alluded to in 22:8 as *the house of the forest.*

3–7. Isaiah, who is the sworn foe of entangling political alliances (cf. 30:1 ff.), rightly fears the fatal consequences of such a visit, and has his prophetic word ready for the foolish king; but it may fairly be doubted whether vss. 5–7 adequately represent Isaiah's announcement. There is no rebuke of Hezekiah's pride or of his foreign leanings, no announcement of immediate or speedy conse-

They are come from a far country unto me, even from
4. Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine
house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine
house have they seen: there is nothing among my
5. treasures that I have not showed them. Then said
Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD of
hosts.
6. Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house,
and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until
this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall
7. be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall
issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take
away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the
8. king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah,
Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken.
[1] He said moreover, [2] For there shall be peace and truth
in my days.

[1] Gr. om. [2] Gr. *let there be, I pray.*

quences; but instead, a prediction of deportation and disgrace for Hezekiah's *posterity* in the land of **Babylon**. In all Isaiah's genuine prophecies, Assyria, not Babylon, is the eastern power to be reckoned with; nor is there any hint that the domination of Assyria is to be followed by the domination of Babylon. This prophecy is not, like Isaiah's prophecies in general, deeply rooted in the contemporary situation. Nevertheless there is a certain poetic truth in it; it is marked by that sense of Nemesis which is so frequent in the Old Testament. From *Babylon* had come the temptation, in *Babylon* the sin would be punished; *everything* had been displayed by Hezekiah, *everything* would be taken to Babylon.

8. **Good**: Hezekiah listens with pious resignation to the word of doom. It does not affect him personally, there is to be *peace and stability* in his days — a sentiment which does not raise our respect for the king.

THE EXILES' BOOK OF CONSOLATION

(CHAPS. 40–55)

THE EXILES' BOOK OF CONSOLATION (Chaps. 40–55)

I. Historical Background and Origin of the Prophecy

Almost exactly two centuries elapsed between the call of Isaiah in 740 B.C. and the publication of the great prophecy contained in Chaps. 40–55. Of the Assyrian empire, which constitutes the background of the prophecies of Isaiah, we hear in this prophecy nothing whatever; its place has been taken by the Babylonian empire (43 : 14 ; 48 : 20). The Assyrians continued to dominate western Asia for about a hundred years after Isaiah's death ; but their empire, which towards the end of that period had begun to totter, came to an end in 607 B.C. with the destruction of their capital city, Nineveh, by the Babylonians, whose empire, in its turn, lasted about seventy years (till 538 B.C.).

It is within this period that the exile falls — that experience which affected so profoundly the subsequent history, religion, and literature of the Jews. The great Nebuchadrezzar came to the throne in 604 B.C. As in the previous century the small Syrian kingdoms, ever restless under the Assyrian yoke, were ever ready to throw it off when opportunity offered, so it was in Judah now. For a few years the king, Jehoiakim, son of the reforming king Josiah, remained the nominal vassal of Babylonia ; but at last he revolted, and consequently drew upon himself and his land the speedy vengeance of his overlord. Nebuchadrezzar appeared upon the scene, besieged Jerusalem, plundered the temple and palace of their treasures, and deported several thousand of the most efficient in-

habitants, including Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, who, just three months before, had ascended the throne (2 Kings 24). This was in 597 B.C. The Babylonians placed Jehoiakim's brother Zedekiah upon the throne of Judah, and for about ten years he remained faithful in his allegiance to Babylon. Then he rebelled, and soon the Babylonian hosts were round the walls of Jerusalem. After a terrible siege of a year and a half the city was taken, its walls destroyed, its temple, palace, and great buildings reduced to ashes, and the best of its inhabitants carried away to Babylon — there to remain for nearly half a century (586–538 B.C.). This is the period known in Hebrew history as the exile.

Of this sorrowful period no history exists, and what we know of it we know only by inference. With the death of Nebuchadrezzar in 561 B.C., after a reign of forty-three years, hope was temporarily kindled in the desperate hearts of the exiles by the clement policy of his successor Evil-merodach, who showed particular favor to their king Jehoiachin by releasing him from the prison in which for thirty-six years he had been languishing (2 Kings 25 : 27 ff.). This hope was probably extinguished by the death of the Babylonian monarch in 559 B.C. At any rate the Jews who, twenty years after, are addressed in Isa. 40–55, are sorrowful and disconsolate enough (cf. 40 : 1).

The control of the Babylonian empire passed in 555 B.C. into the weak hands of Nabonidus, who cared more for religious and antiquarian interests than for political and military enterprise. Suddenly about this time a new figure appeared upon the historical horizon in the person of the conqueror Cyrus, a Persian, no less gifted as a man than as a soldier. His whole career is a romance. With almost incredible rapidity he pursued his victorious way through Asia (Isa. 41 : 3). The Median empire fell before him in 549 B.C., and the Lydian empire, whose head was the wealthy Crœsus, in 546 B.C.; and no doubt it is somewhere between that date and 538, when Cyrus captured Babylon and brought her dominion to an end, that the great anony-

mous prophet sought to comfort and stimulate his exiled brethren with the noble words which now form Chaps. 40–55 of the book of Isaiah.

The Babylonian background of these chapters is as plain as words can make it. Jerusalem and the cities of Judah are a desolation, her temple has been razed to the ground (44 : 26–28 ; 51 : 3), her people are languishing in Babylonia (48 : 20). Babylon is the empire which, for her pride and cruelty (47 : 6), is doomed to speedy extinction ; and Babylon's are the gods on whom scornful ridicule is poured (46 : 1). Cyrus is announced as the conqueror by whom Bablyon is to be overthrown and Israel set free. He it is who will execute Jehovah's purpose on Babylon (48: 14), set free the exiles (45 : 13), and rebuild Jerusalem (44 : 28). To this high task he has been divinely called (41 : 2, 25), and in it he is divinely upheld (45 : 1–5). He is not predicted as a figure of the distant future ; he is already on the stage of history, and well advanced on his triumphant career. Already victory has attended his every step (41 : 2), and soon he will burst Babylon's gates of bronze in sunder (45 : 2). We shall not go far wrong if we set the prophecy about the year 540 B.C. — after the brilliant successes of Cyrus had become matter of common knowledge, but before his capture of Babylon (in 538 B.C.).

II. The Prophet's Message

Deutero-Isaiah (that is, second Isaiah) — as this nameless prophet is now commonly called — addressed himself to the difficult task of consoling his fellow-countrymen in exile, and of interpreting for them the signs of the times. They are despondent. They not unnaturally imagine that their God has forgotten or forsaken them (49 : 14), that he ignores their case and cares nothing for their fate (40 : 27). The prophet's first aim is therefore to inspire them with his own magnificent conception of God. His people, now half a century in exile, might well believe that the gods

of Babylon, Bel, Nebo, etc. (46 : 1), are more powerful than their own God Jehovah. But not so. Jehovah is the omnipotent God of the universe, the Creator and Lord of the mountains, the world, the stars. This is the real significance of the familiar and splendid description of the power of God in Chap. 40 : it is meant to inspire a broken-hearted people with faith and hope. Israel's God is the mighty God, never faint and never weary, but ever fresh and strong, and able to inspire the weak and the faint with something of his own strength (40 : 28 ff.).

He is Lord of nature; he is no less Lord of history — another reason why the disconsolate people should take courage. For he is the First and the Last, the Eternal One ; he knows the end from the beginning and announces it through his prophets. All the generations are his (41 : 4), and they are all moving on to the grand consummation, when they shall all voluntarily acknowledge him. The sense of purpose that runs through the universe is finely expressed in 45 : 18 f., where Jehovah is represented as creating the earth not to be a waste, but to be inhabited by saved and happy men, and as speaking his great word of revelation to Israel and, through Israel, to the world, plainly and in no dark and mystic way. Nature and history alike are pervaded by intelligence,[1] order, purpose ; and the ultimate end of the long series of events we call history is that all men should be saved. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (45 : 22).

This salvation, however, can only come through a knowledge of God, of Israel's God — for he alone is the true God (45 : 6) ; and this knowledge of God can only be mediated by Israel, for she alone possesses it. "Surely God is in *thee*," the foreign peoples say to her (45 : 14), and she alone is his competent witness — "*Ye* are my witnesses" (43 : 10, 12). Especially will Israel attain to her power to testify for him through her experience of his omnipotent grace in delivering her from exile. And here

[1] For "*spirit* of the Lord" in 40 : 13, the Greek version suggestively reads *mind*.

we can see the immense significance, to our prophet, of Cyrus. He speaks of him in language that sounds as extravagant as it is daring, showering upon him promises the most lavish and titles the most lofty, like Jehovah's Shepherd or Friend, and Anointed (44 : 28 ; 45 : 1) — titles which, pronounced as they were upon a foreigner, seem to have stirred the prophet's narrow-hearted countrymen to incredulity and resentment (45 : 9 ff.). But it is for *Israel's* sake that Cyrus has been called and equipped to do his mighty work of overthrowing Babylon : primarily for Israel's sake, that she may be emancipated and thus enjoy the great experience of redemption (45 : 4), but ultimately for the sake of the whole world — "that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none beside me" (45 : 6). The goal of history is that every knee shall bow to Jehovah (45 : 23), and every soul confess with joy that she belongs to him (44 : 5). Thus Israel is Jehovah's Servant, for her mission is to bring the round world to a knowledge of him ; and Cyrus is his Anointed or Messiah, for it is through him that Israel is set free, thus winning her historic experience of redemption.

With such a God, then, who has shown both his power and his love for her by raising up Cyrus, why should Israel be depressed or afraid? She is indeed dull and irresponsive, blind to the signs of the times, and deaf to the sound of the divine footsteps in contemporary history (42 : 18) ; and what she needs — to come back to the point from which we started — is a vision of God, of his omnipotence and his love. This it is that will comfort (40 : 1), encourage, nerve her, if only she can be persuaded to believe it. "Fear not" is rung out by the prophet again and again (44 : 2, 8 ; 54 : 4). Jehovah is mighty, and as kind and tender as he is mighty (54 : 8), caring for Israel as a shepherd for his lambs (40 : 11), pitying her more than a mother her babe (49 : 15), sustaining her with a love that shall outlive the mightiest and most permanent things in

the universe (54 : 10). Of these two things, then, the prophet very earnestly seeks to convince his despondent people — of God and of their high destiny, which is to bring the world to God. This destiny constitutes Israel in a peculiar sense his Servant.

III. The Servant of Jehovah

The figure of the Servant — his mission, his experience, and his ultimate destiny — is sketched more particularly in four songs, 42 : 1–4 ; 49 : 1–6 ; 50 : 4–9 ; and 52 : 13–53 : 12, which it has of late become customary to isolate from the body of the poem and consider independently. These songs reveal a certain progressive development in their idea of the Servant. The first (42 : 1–4) concentrates attention upon his mission, which is to bring the true religion to the nations of the world, and upon the kind and unobtrusive way in which he is to accomplish it. The second (49 : 1–6) touches upon his divine equipment for that mission, and upon the sorrow and seeming futility which has thus far attended his efforts (49 : 4). The third (50 : 4–9) describes more explicitly the sorrow and the opposition he had to endure (50 : 6), but sets over against this his invincible faith in God and his splendid confidence in the ultimate triumph of the cause he represents. The climax of the description is reached in the fourth song (52 : 13–53 : 12), which elaborates with very striking concrete detail the sufferings of the Servant, and shows him in the end crowned with glory and honor.

Who is this Servant? This question has been hotly debated in recent years, and the answers to it divide the critical camp. After the argument of the previous chapter, it is most natural to suppose that Israel is the Servant, as, indeed, in the body of the prophecy he is repeatedly and unambiguously called (cf. 41 : 8 ; 44 : 1, 21 ; 45 : 4 ; 48 : 20). But for several reasons objection has been taken to this view. The temper of the songs differs, it is argued, from

that of the prophecy. The prophecy brings before us the real Israel, irresponsive, blind, and deaf (42 : 18 ff.); the Servant of the songs is an exalted figure to whom this description would be quite inappropriate. The Servant of the songs suffers for sins that were not his own (53 : 4–6); in the prophecy it is for her own sins that Israel suffers (40 : 2). In the prophecy, the foreign nations are looked upon with less generous and sympathetic eyes — the impending downfall of Babylon, for example, is celebrated in a scornful elegy (Chap. 47) ; in the songs, the Servant is to be a light to the Gentiles, and to carry the salvation of Jehovah to the end of the earth (49 : 6). In general, the Servant of the songs is supremely interested in the heathen; in the prophecy, Israel is more interested in herself, especially in Chaps. 49–55, where attention gathers largely upon the coming welfare and glory of Zion.

For these and other reasons it has been maintained by many scholars that the Servant of the songs cannot be the Israel of the prophecy, the actual historical Israel, with her blindness and her sin ; but that, if the term be collective at all, it must refer either to ideal Israel — Israel, not as she is in reality, but as she is in the purpose of God and in the light of her mission and destiny — or to the group of faithful souls, in whom this ideal found its concrete embodiment. Others deny the collective application in the songs altogether, and regard the Servant there as an individual.

Some encouragement has been given to this latter view by two circumstances. (1) Once or twice[1] the Servant seems to be expressly distinguished from Israel : for example, in 49 : 5 f., where, according to the common English translation, his primary task is "to bring Jacob again to Jehovah," "to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel." But these verses[2] can be fairly read to imply no more than that the restoration of Israel is

[1] In 53 : 8 for "transgression of *my people*," we should perhaps read either "for *our* transgressions" or "for the transgression of *the peoples*." The change in Hebrew would be exceedingly simple. [2] See the commentary.

to be effected by *Jehovah*; and then *Israel*, thus restored by him, is to be a light to the Gentiles. (2) Again, the description of the Servant, especially in Chap. 53, is so highly individualized, it is argued, as to necessitate an individual interpretation, the collective reference being unnatural and improbable, if not altogether impossible; and Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel, some Messianic king, have been thought of. But here we have to remember how much more easy personification has always been to the Oriental than to us, and how much more ready he is to work out in minute detail a personification upon which once he has entered. "The whole head is sick," says Isaiah, of Judah, "and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and festering sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with oil" (1 : 5 f.); and Ezekiel (Chaps. 16 and 23) describes the national careers of Israel and Judah in terms of the experience of two unfaithful women, elaborating his comparison with detail of the most painfully concrete kind. The fact, then, that the description of the Servant is so highly individualized is no proof that he is an individual; consequently we are free to consider the possibility of his being the people — Israel.

It is something in favor of this interpretation that everywhere in the body of the prophecy the Servant is undoubtedly Israel (cf. 41 : 8). Once even in the songs, the Servant is explicitly addressed as Israel (49 : 3), and the Greek version of 42 : 1 reads "*Jacob* my servant" and "*Israel* my chosen." Even if these be all late insertions, they are at any rate evidence for the view that the servant was very early regarded as Israel. The context of the songs strongly suggests that they are integral to the prophecy, and that their theme is the same. 42 : 6, "I will give thee for a light of the Gentiles," clearly points back to the first song (42 : 1–4); and 52 : 10, "The LORD hath made bare his holy arm," as clearly prepares the way for the last (52 : 13–53 : 12; cf. 53 : 1, "to whom hath the

arm of the LORD been revealed?"). Cross references between the songs and the prophecy are numerous; and, in cases where the phraseology is almost identical, it is most natural to interpret the possibly ambiguous references of the songs by the unambiguous references of the prophecy. For example,

> Attend unto me, *O my people*,
> And give ear unto me, *O my nation;*[1]
> For a law shall go forth from me,
> And my judgement for a light of the peoples (51 : 4).

Here the allusion to the first song (42 : 1–4) is unmistakable. Here (in 51 : 4) it is the *people* who are addressed; why not then also in 42 : 1–4? So also 51 : 8, admittedly addressed to the *people* (cf. vs. 7), unmistakably recalls 50 : 9, where the *Servant* speaks.

Another argument which makes strongly for the collective and against the individual interpretation is the large outlook of the passages which describe the work the Servant is commissioned to do, and the impression made by his sufferings and triumph. His mission is to the *world*, and it is whole *nations* that are astonished at his humiliation and exaltation (52 : 14 f.). All this seems to point most naturally to experiences upon a national scale; it is the fortunes of a people rather than of an individual that are watched by the world. Further, the function of the Servant in bringing religion and justice to the Gentiles (42 : 1–4) is curiously paralleled by the noble prophecy in 2 : 2–4, which pictures the nations as flocking for justice to *Jerusalem*. All these considerations strongly suggest that in the songs, as in the prophecy, the Servant is Israel. The outlook in both upon the world is much the same; there is only a difference in emphasis. Certainly in the prophecy — especially towards the close — Zion and her

[1] Even if, with Duhm, Cheyne, Marti, Box, we delete *O my nation* as metrically superfluous, and as a corruption of the two preceding Hebrew words, the argument is unaffected. *O my people* in the first clause stands, and the context shows that the address is to Israel (vss. 1, 7).

fortunes occupy the foreground, but the welfare of the wider world is never forgotten. Israel's salvation is but the first step to the salvation of the world. It was first "for Jacob my servant's sake" that Cyrus was called to the overthrow of Babylon (45 : 4), but ultimately that across the world from east to west men might acknowledge Jehovah (45 : 6), that to him every knee might bow and every tongue swear (45 : 23).

Not even the songs open a wider or more brilliant prospect than that. But the final conversion of the heathen receives in the last song peculiarly pathetic and significant expression. It takes the form of a confession that the sins for which Jehovah's servant suffered so tragically were not his own, but theirs (Chap. 53).[1] In this penitent appreciation of the Servant and his sufferings, the conversion of the heathen world is practically attested, and the prophet's dream is ideally fulfilled. The Servant is now vindicated, his mission is accomplished, the world is converted ; and in this crowning song the prophet's most daring hopes find an embodiment as beautiful as it is immortal.

Throughout the Servant songs, Israel is *ideally* conceived. They are not a description, but a splendidly original interpretation, of her sufferings and destiny. Doubtless the nation never did, as a nation, fulfil the wonderful programme sketched for her in these songs by one of her greatest sons ; and it was a true instinct that led the New Testament Church to see in it an adumbration of the sufferings, the work, and the triumph of our Lord (Mat. 12 : 18–21; Acts 8 : 32–35, etc.).

IV. The Style of Deutero-Isaiah

The style of Chaps. 40–55 is very different from that of Isaiah himself. Isaiah is incisive ; this writer tends to

[1] In vss. 1–11, the heathen (cf. 52 : 15) appear to be the speakers. See the commentary.

an agreeable diffuseness — agreeable, because he too, like Isaiah, is a great master of the music of human speech, and can express the few great thoughts which stir him with endless variety. Both display great powers of imagination; but in this, as in other respects, "Isaiah is very bold," the writer of these chapters is less daring, more soft and tender. Especially does his imagination kindle when he thinks of his beloved Zion and the glory that he anticipates for her in the near future. Nowhere has this received more beautiful expression than in the noble picture of mother Zion, welcoming back, with wonder in her eyes, the multitude of her scattered children. They are so many that the old city is too small for them, and she cannot bring herself to believe that these thronging hosts are hers (49: 18–21).

The poet is calling upon the city to lift up her eyes and behold the returning children she had never thought to see again:

Lift up thine eyes round about and behold
  How they gather together.
And thou shalt be gaily adorned with them,
  As a bride with her girdle.
And thou shalt have scarce room enough for them all —
  When far off are the spoilers.
Then this cry shall resound in thine ears from the sons
  Whom thou long wast bereft of:
"This place is too strait and too narrow for me,
  Give me more room to dwell in."
Then indeed shalt thou marvel and say in thine heart,
  "Who hath borne me these children?
For all unfruitful and childless am I:
  Who hath brought up these children?
As for me, I was lonely and desolate; say,
  Who then are these children?"

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS 40–55

JEHOVAH THE OMNIPOTENT IS ABOUT TO USHER IN THE DAY OF ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE (Chaps. 40–48)

1. Jehovah is Lord of nature and history (chaps. 40 and 41).
   - (1) Redemption is nigh (40 : 1–11).
   - (2) The sovereignty and omnipotence of God as seen in nature (40 : 12–31).
   - (3) The sovereignty of God as seen in history, and especially in the rise of Cyrus (chap. 41).
2. The servant (Israel), his task and destiny (42 : 1–44 : 23).
   - (1) The servant's task (42 : 1–9).
   - (2) The new song (42 : 10–13).
   - (3) Jehovah at last bestirs himself (42 : 14–17).
   - (4) A call for responsiveness on Israel's part (42 : 18–25).
   - (5) Jehovah will show his love for Israel by gathering her exiles home (43 : 1–7).
   - (6) Israel is Jehovah's witness to the world (43 : 8–13).
   - (7) The deliverance from Babylon more wonderful than the deliverance from Egypt (43 : 14–21).
   - (8) Israel's restoration is due not to her own merits, but to Jehovah's free grace (43 : 22–44 : 5).
   - (9) Israel's God is sovereign and eternal (44 : 6–8).
   - (10) The folly of idolatry (44 : 9–20).
   - (11) Let the world rejoice over Israel's redemption (44 : 21–23).
3. Cyrus and the overthrow of Babylon (44 : 24–48 : 22).
   - (1) Jehovah calls Cyrus and bestows upon him a career of victory, for Israel and the world's sake (44 : 24–45 : 8).
   - (2) Murmurs against Cyrus (45 : 9–13).
   - (3) The heathen acknowledged the uniqueness of Israel and her God (45 : 14–17).
   - (4) Jehovah desires the salvation of the whole world (45 : 18–25).
   - (5) The downfall of Babylon's gods (chap. 46).
   - (6) The downfall of Babylon (chap. 47).
   - (7) The summons to depart from Babylon (chap. 48).

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND THE FUTURE GLORY OF ZION (Chaps. 49–55)

1. The Servant discouraged, but at last triumphant (49 : 1–13).
   - (1) The Servant: his seeming failure and his great destiny (49 : 1–6).
   - (2) Israel's happy return and restoration (49 : 7–13).

2. The consolation of Zion (49 : 14–50 : 3).
   (1) Wasted Zion will be rebuilt and filled again with people (49 : 14–21).
   (2) Three words of consolation (49 : 22–50 : 3).
3. The Servant tried but trusting (50 : 4–11).
4. Words of encouragement and promise (51 : 1–52 : 12).
   (1) Deliverance is near and sure (51 : 1–16).
   (2) Jerusalem's affliction: her speedy redemption and glory (51 : 17–52 : 12).
5. The humiliation and exaltation of the servant (52 : 13–53 : 12).
   (1) The Servant: his sufferings and his great glory (52 : 13–53 : 1).
   (2) The sorrows, humiliation, and death of the servant (53 : 2–9).
   (3) The Servant's ultimate glory and exaltation (53 : 10–12).
6. The future glory of Jerusalem (chap. 54).
   (1) The new Jerusalem will be large and populous, and blessed with the steadfast favor of God (54 : 1–10).
   (2) The new Jerusalem will be fair and impregnable (54 : 11–17).
7. Invitation to embrace the impending salvation (chap. 55).
   (1) The blessings in store for Israel (55 : 1–5).
   (2) The wonderful salvation is near: forth then from Babylon (55 : 6–13).

THE EXILES' BOOK OF CONSOLATION (Chaps. 40–55)

PART I

JEHOVAH THE OMNIPOTENT IS ABOUT TO USHER IN THE DAY OF ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE (Chaps. 40–48) 40:2

The Glorious News — Redemption is Nigh (40:1–11)

40. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,"
Saith your God.
2. [1] "Speak ye [2] comfortably to Jerusalem,
And cry unto her,

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[1] Gr. *ye priests, speak,* etc. [2] Heb. *to the heart of.*

Chaps. 40–48. As we have seen, the time is about 540 B.C., the place is Babylonia, the people addressed are the disconsolate Hebrew exiles, the speaker is a prophet whose name is unknown. His task is no easy one. The men whom he seeks to inspire with comfort and hope are men who believe that God has forsaken and forgotten them (40:27), and he seeks to confirm their shattered faith by confronting them with his own magnificent conception of God as the only and incomparable Lord of nature and history.

1. **Comfort**, the key-note of the prophecy; twice repeated, for the people are despondent (vs. 27), and such a message is all but incredible. **Ye**, plural; the command is addressed to the prophet and to all who, like him, have the power to comfort. That power depended upon the power to hear the voice of God in the events of the times; your God **saith**, is continually speaking in those events — though there were few who could, like this prophet, interpret the real significance for Israel of the victorious progress of Cyrus.

2. **Comfortably** — home *to the heart of* (cf. margin), as a man speaks to a maid whom he woos. **Warfare**, *i.e.* time of sore

That her [1] warfare is accomplished,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
That she hath received of the LORD's hand
Double for all her sins."

Mat. 3:3
Mk. 1:3
Lk. 3:4 ff.
Jn. 1:23

3. The voice of one that crieth, "Prepare ye in the wilderness
The way of the LORD,
Make straight [2] in the desert
A high way for our God.
4. Every valley shall be exalted,
And every mountain and hill shall be made low:
And [3] the crooked shall be made straight,
And the rough places [4] plain:"
5. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see [5] it together;
For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

6. The voice of one saying, "Cry."
And [6] one said, "What shall I cry?"

[1] m. *time of service.* [2] Gr. om. *in the desert.* [3] m. SV *the uneven shall be made level.* [4] m. SV *a plain.* [5] Gr. *the salvation of God,* cf. Lk. 3:6. [6] Gr. Vg. *I said.*

service. **Double** perhaps means no more than that Jerusalem's punishment (in exile) has been thorough.

Prepare for Jehovah's coming (vss. 3–5)

3. **The voice** = *hark!* The prophet hears a supernatural voice. Jehovah is to march at the head of his people across the *wilderness* from Babylon to Palestine, and the way for him must be **prepared**, made straight and plain — without heights or hollows (vs. 4). The literal meaning melts into the figurative; the whole historical situation is about to be transformed. To the keen eyes of the prophet **the glory of Jehovah** was already shimmering through the clouds.

"All flesh is grass,
And all the [1] goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: 1 Pet. 1:24 f. Jas. 1:10 f.
7. [2] The grass withereth, the flower fadeth;
Because the breath of the LORD bloweth upon it:
Surely the people is grass.
8. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth;
But the word of our God shall stand for ever."

9. [3] O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,
Get thee up into the high mountain;
[4] O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,
Lift up thy voice with strength;
Lift it up,
Be not afraid;
Say unto the cities of Judah,
"Behold, your God!"

[1] Gr. *glory of man.* [2] Gr. om. vs. 7. [3] m. AV *O Zion, that bringest good tidings.* [4] m. AV *O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings.*

The Prophet's Message; Nothing is Eternal but the Divine Purpose (vss. 6–8)

This is the theme of vss. 12–31. Another supernatural voice urges the prophet to proclaim the inevitable decay of **all flesh**, *i.e.* of the mighty heathen empires, like the Babylonian, which were not in line with the purpose of God. They wither, as **the breath of Jehovah**, the hot wind from the desert, withers the flowers. But **the word of our God**, *i.e.* his great purpose as proclaimed and interpreted by the prophets, — his world-plan, which needs Israel for its realization, — that is eternal. *Surely the people is grass* (vs. 7) is rightly regarded by Cheyne as a "weak homiletical addition."

Declare the Glad News: Jehovah is coming (vss. 9–11)

9. The way is prepared for his coming (vs. 3), the messengers are to climb the heights, and loudly proclaim — the moment they catch sight of him — **Behold your God.**

10. Behold, the LORD God will come [1] as a mighty one,
And his arm shall rule for him:
Behold, his reward is with him,
And his recompence before him.
11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,
He shall gather the lambs in his arm,
And carry them in his bosom,
And shall gently lead those that give suck.

The Sovereignty and Omnipotence of God as seen in Nature (40:12–31)

12. Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,
And meted out heaven with the span,
And comprehended [2] the dust of the earth in a measure,
And weighed the mountains in scales,
And the hills in a balance?

Rom. 11: 34 f. 1 Cor. 2: 16

13. Who hath [3] directed the [4] spirit of the LORD,
Or being his counsellor hath taught him?

[1] Gr. Syr. Tar. Vg. *with strength.* [2] Gr. *all the earth.* [3] m. *meted out;* Gr. *known.* [4] Gr. *mind.*

10 f. With his mighty **arm**, he secures for his people salvation, here described as *his* **reward** — their redemption from Babylon and return to Palestine. The mighty conqueror, who wins their victory, is the gentle shepherd, who tenderly guides them home; a fine combination.

40:12–31. The magnificent description of the might and wisdom of God which follows is intended to reassure the despondent (vs. 27). There is no danger that the purpose of God (vs. 8), which involves the deliverance of Israel, will be frustrated; for all power is his. This is illustrated fully on the arena of nature and, briefly, in history.

Jehovah is Peerless in Wisdom and Might (vss. 12–16)

12 f. The majesty and order of *nature* testify to his incomparable might and intelligence. Spirit, here almost = *mind* (so Gr.). Jehovah is alone.

14. With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him,
And taught him in the path of judgement [1] and taught him knowledge,
And shewed him the way of understanding?

15. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket,
And are counted as the [2] small dust of the balance:
[3] Behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.
16. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn,
Nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering.

17. All the nations are as nothing before him;
They are counted to him less than nothing, and [4] vanity.
18. To whom then will ye liken God?
Or what likeness will ye compare unto him?
19. The graven image, a workman melted *it*,

[1] Gr. om. [2] Gr. *turning*. [3] Gr. *they shall be counted as spittle*. [4] Heb. *chaos* (cf. Gen. 1:2).

14. The Greek version rightly omits *and taught him knowledge*. **The path of judgement**, of *right*, *i.e.* the right control of *history*.

15. Like a drop *from* (almost = *on*) a bucket, or like dust, etc.; of no appreciable weight, insignificant. **Isles**, usually = coastlands (cf. 20:6), in Deutero-Isaiah practically = lands. **A very little thing**, something *fine*, like manna (Exod. 16:14).

16. For such a God, no sacrifice would be adequate. A verse of splendid imagination; not all the cedars of Lebanon enough for altar fires, nor all the beasts that roam her forests enough for sacrifice.

The Folly of worshipping such a God by Images (vss. 17–20)

17f. **Less than** may be omitted. **Vanity**, chaos (Gen. 1:2). If even nations are nothing, how great the folly of likening God to anything!

19. This is the first of the prophet's attacks on idolatry (cf. 44:9–20; 46:1–7), which was rampant in Babylon. The pathetic folly of it he illustrates by an ironically realistic description

And the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold,
[1] And casteth *for it* silver chains.

20. [2] He that is too impoverished for *such* an oblation
Chooseth a tree that will not rot;
He seeketh unto him a cunning workman
To set up a graven image, that shall not be moved.

21. Have ye not known? have ye not heard?
Hath it not been told you from the beginning?
Have ye not [3] understood
From the foundations of the earth?

22. *It is* he that sitteth [4] upon the circle of the earth,
And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;

[1] Gr. *he fashioned it as a likeness.* [2] Gr. *an artificer chooseth,* etc. [3] m. Gr. Syr. Vg. *understood the foundations.* [4] m. SV *above.*

of the process of idol manufacture. Omit *and casteth for it silver chains.*

It is generally admitted that this verse should be followed by 41:6, 7, which are clearly not in place where they now stand. There is grim humor in this description (41:6 f.) of the workmen cheering each other up, while they are fabricating the image. *That it should not be moved* has probably crept in from 40:20, where it is original. The precautions taken to keep the image from toppling over show the absurdity of idolatry.

20. **He that is too impoverished for such an oblation**, for several reasons, can hardly be right. With two slight changes in the text, Duhm reads, *he who carves an image.* Apparently in 19 f. as in 44:12 ff., two kinds of images are described — first metal, and then wood.

God's Control of Nature and History (vss. 21–26)

21. The power of God ought to be **known**, familiar, to every one who contemplates nature. In any case, the story of it must be familiar, handed on as it was by tradition from the most ancient times and recorded in one of Israel's own books (Gen. 2). Read, "*do* you not know . . . hear?"

22. From his throne in heaven high *above* the earth, men look like grasshoppers. **A curtain**, gauze.

[1] That stretcheth out the heavens as [2] a curtain,
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

23. That bringeth princes to nothing;
He maketh the judges of the earth as [3] vanity.
24. [4] Yea, they have not been planted;
Yea, they have not been sown;

Yea, their stock hath not
Taken root in the earth:
Moreover he bloweth upon them, and they wither,
And the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble.

25. To whom then will ye liken me,
That I should be equal *to him?* saith the Holy One.
26. Lift up your eyes on high,
[5] And see who hath created these,

That bringeth out their host by number;
He calleth them all by name;
By the greatness of his might, and [6] for that he is strong in power,
Not one is lacking.

[1] Gr. *that set up the heaven as a vaulted chamber.* [2] m. *gauze.* [3] Heb. *chaos* (cf. vs. 17). [4] m. *scarce are they planted, scarce are they sown, scarce hath their stock taken root in the earth, when he bloweth upon them.* [5] m. *and see; who hath created these? he that,* etc. [6] Gr. *by the strength of his power.*

23 f. He is Lord of history, as of nature (vs. 22). Mighty **princes** had within the last few years been defeated by Cyrus (cf. 41:2), his anointed (45:1). Vs. 24 becomes plain in the margin: *scarcely are they planted . . . when he blows* (cf. vss. 6–8).

25 f. There can be no image of one who controls history and created the stars. **These**, the stars; they are conceived as an army — as living things which come forth, like soldiers, from their place when Jehovah summons them by name — they obey. Read: *by reason of the greatness of (his) might and the strength of (his) power, not one is missing.*

27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob,
And speakest, O Israel,
"My way is hid from the LORD,
And my judgement is passed away from my God"?

28. Hast thou not known?
Hast thou not heard?
[1] The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,

Fainteth not, neither is weary;
There is no searching of his understanding.
29. He giveth power to the faint;
And to him that hath no might he increaseth strength.

30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall:
31. But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength;
They [2] shall mount up with wings as eagles;

[1] m. *the LORD is an everlasting God, the Creator . . . he fainteth not,* etc. [2] Gr. Vg. *put forth new pinions.*

Trust brings Strength (vss. 27–31)

27. The cumulative force of the long argument for the power of God is now driven home with overwhelming cogency and earnestness upon the despondent people who had begun to doubt the power and the love of their God. **Way** = *fate.* **My judgment** = my case, the justice of my cause. **Passed away from** = *ignored by.*

28 f. Read, *an everlasting God is Jehovah . . . he fainteth not.* He is full of strength and wisdom. So far is he from being faint himself that *he gives power to the faint* — the spiritually faint, as vs. 31 shows.

30 f. Physical strength will fail; but patient faith in God enables a man to soar, as on eagles' wings, above the disappointments of the present, towards the sure and blessed future. This utterance from a time of national despair (vs. 27) is itself a brilliant illustration of that faith which can see beyond the sorrow of

They shall run, and not be weary;
They shall walk, and not faint.

The Sovereignty of God as seen in History, and especially in the Rise of Cyrus (Chap. 41)

41. [1] Keep silence before me, O islands;
And let the peoples renew their strength:

[1] Gr. *hold a feast of consecration.*

the night to the joy that cometh in the morning. For **they mount**, etc., read rather, *they put forth as it were eagles' wings.*

Chap. 41. The prophet had sought, in Chap. 40, to comfort and stimulate the disconsolate people by passing before them the panorama of nature, with its mighty testimony to the power and wisdom of God. Now he passes from nature to history, upon which he had already slightly touched (40: 23 f.), and illustrates the divine purpose which has controlled it from the beginning until now, and which gives a world of significance to the rise and the victorious career of Cyrus. That career, rightly interpreted, is the proof that Jehovah is mindful of his people. So from history the prophet clinches the argument for the ever present power and love of God which he had already drawn from nature.

Twice, in this chapter, the argument for the uniqueness of Israel's God is illustrated, in a way strange to us but significant for the ancient world, by a comparison between his power, especially his predictive power, and that of the heathen gods. The great Cyrus is marching triumphantly across the world; which of those gods had predicted this? which of them even now knows the meaning or the issue of it? They have no key to history, their oracles are unable to interpret it. It is a Hebrew prophet who sees it to be illuminated with a divine Presence and instinct with a divine purpose (vs. 4); it is he who, inspired by his God, announces and interprets aright the rise of Cyrus. Thus in this way again is brought home to the people the folly of idolatry, the immeasurable greatness of their God, and the inestimable privilege that is theirs in having him and calling him their own.

The helplessness of contemporary heathen oracles to interpret or appreciate the new situation created by Cyrus is expounded in a very striking passage by Principal G. A. Smith (*Isaiah*, vol. ii, pp. 113–120).

Let them come near; then let them speak:
Let us come near together to judgement.

2. Who hath raised up one from the east,
[1] Whom he calleth in righteousness to his foot?
He giveth nations before him,
And [2] maketh him rule over kings;

He giveth them as the dust to his sword,
As the driven stubble to his bow.
3. He pursueth them, and passeth on safely;
Even by a way that he had not gone with his feet.

[1] m. *whom righteousness calleth to its foot;* or, *whom righteousness meeteth whithersoever he goeth.* [2] Gr. *terrifieth.*

The Rise of Cyrus a Proof of Jehovah's Power (vss. 1–5)

1. The **islands** (*i.e.* distant heathen *lands*, cf. 40:15) are summoned **to judgement**, *i.e.* to have the question judicially argued; how are the rise and victories of Cyrus to be explained? what, or rather **who** (vs. 2) is the cause of them? **Renew their strength**, here inappropriate, has apparently been repeated from the preceding vs. (40:31). The opening words may have run:

Listen to me in silence, ye coastlands,
And ye peoples, wait for my arguing.

2. **One from the east**, Cyrus (cf. vs. 25), named in 44:28: 45:1. **Whom he calleth**, etc.: rather, *one whom victory meets at every step.* The word rendered *righteousness* has a wide meaning in this prophecy; it is often that by which the *right* (man, people, or cause) is vindicated — hence it approximates to vindication, victory, salvation. **Maketh him rule over**: obscure; either *brings down, subdues*, or *terrifies*. **He giveth them**, etc.: perhaps, *his sword makes them like dust, his bow like driven stubble.* These are allusions to the victories of Cyrus; he had conquered Media in 549 B.C., and Crœsus of Lydia in 546.

3. **Even by a way**, etc.: *the path he treads not*, does not seem to touch, *with his feet* — an allusion to the swiftness of his marches.

4. Who hath wrought and done it,
Calling the generations from the beginning?
I the LORD, the first,
And with the last, I am he.

5. The isles saw, and feared;
The ends of the earth trembled;
They drew near, and came.[1]

6. They helped every one his neighbour;
And *every one* said to his brother, "Be of good courage."
7. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith,
And he that smootheth with the hammer him that smiteth the anvil,
Saying of the soldering, "It is good";
And he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

8. But thou, Israel, my servant,
Jacob whom I have chosen,
The seed of Abraham my friend; Jas. 2:23

[1] Gr. adds *together*.

4. The rise of Cyrus is a historical event which, like all history, finds its explanation in God. Jehovah is Lord of history, his purpose inspires it, and it is his call that stirs up great men, like Cyrus, to fulfil that purpose.

5. Probably a late verse. The people of the *isles* are already present (vs. 1) and do not require to draw near.

6 f. follow 40:19, which see.

Israel is Jehovah's Servant, loved and upheld by Him (vss. 8–10)

8 f. **But thou**, in contrast to the people subdued by Cyrus (vs. 2). **My servant** — the first appearance in the prophecy of this important phrase. Here clearly **Israel** is meant — the nation, not an

9. Thou whom I have taken hold of from the ends of the earth,
And called thee from the [1] corners thereof,
And said unto thee, "Thou art my servant,
I have chosen thee and not cast thee away";

10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee;
[2] Be not dismayed, for I am thy God:
I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee;
Yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11. Behold, all they that are incensed against thee
Shall be ashamed and confounded:
They that strive with thee
Shall be as nothing, and shall perish.

12. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them,
Even them that contend with thee:
They that war against thee
Shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

[1] Gr. *watch-towers.* [2] m. *look not around thee;* Gr. *wander not.*

individual. As the **chosen** servant, Israel stands in special relation to Jehovah — a relation rooted in the past and going back to the days of **Abraham my friend**, whose home was in **the ends of the earth**, *i.e.* Mesopotamia — and therefore has nothing to **fear** from Cyrus (vs. 10), who has been *called* (vs. 4) of God to effect Israel's deliverance.

10. **Be not dismayed**: *look not around thee* anxiously (cf. margin). **I will strengthen**, etc.: very emphatic; I will assuredly. **The right hand of my righteousness**: *my right hand* which will *vindicate* thee (cf. vs. 2); my victorious right hand.

Israel Triumphant over her Foes (vss. 11–16)

These verses explain how Jehovah will vindicate Israel (vs. 10) — by making her triumphant over the forces that oppose her.

13. For I the LORD thy God
Will hold thy right hand,
Saying unto thee, "Fear not;
I will help thee."

14. [1] Fear not, thou worm Jacob,
And ye men of Israel;
I will help thee, saith the LORD,
And thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

15. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument
Having teeth:
Thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small,
And shalt make the hills as chaff.

16. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away,
And the whirlwind shall scatter them:
And thou shalt rejoice in the LORD,
Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17. The poor and needy seek water and there is none,
And their tongue faileth for thirst;

[1] Gr. *fear not, O Jacob, O Israel few in number.*

13. **Saying**: *I who say.* **Fear not**: three times in this short section (10, 13f.) — showing how real is Israel's fear.

14–16. **Ye men of Israel** becomes, by a simple and probable change, *thou (puny) worm Israel.* *Worm* suggests helplessness, but *Jehovah helps her*, turns her weakness into strength, and enables her to thresh not only grain, but mountains — symbols of giant opposition — with deadly thoroughness. In vs. 15 omit *sharp.*

Jehovah's Wondrous Restoration of his People (vss. 17–20)

17 f. In this picture of the restoration, as in 40: 3 f., the material melts into the spiritual. The people, languishing in exile, are

I the LORD will answer them,
I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18. I will open rivers on the bare heights,
And fountains in the midst of the valleys:
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
And the dry land [1] springs of water.

19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar,
The acacia tree, and the myrtle, and the [2] oil tree;
I will set in the desert the [3] fir tree,
The [4] pine, and the [5] box tree together:

20. That they may see, and know,
And consider and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD hath done this,
And the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

21. Produce your cause,
Saith the LORD;

[1] Gr. *water-courses.* [2] m. *oleaster.* [3] SVm. *cypress.* [4] m. *plane.* [5] m. *cypress.*

represented as thirsty, and they will be refreshed with abundance of water (cf. 35:6 f.).

19 f. The dreary *wilderness* through which they have to pass will be transformed into an enchanting oasis, planted with glorious trees, such as grew on Lebanon (60:13); and the object of the transformation is to convince the people to a demonstration that *the hand of their God* is in this thing. These words (vss. 17–20), whose literal meaning is not, of course, to be ignored, surely also suggest the miraculous transformation of the existing historical situation.

No Heathen God can predict the Future (vss. 21–24)

Here begins another dispute, like vss. 1–4, not this time, however, with the heathen worshippers, but with their gods themselves; a challenge which shows the helplessness of those gods to

Bring forth your strong reasons,
Saith the King of Israel.

22. Let them [1] bring them forth and declare unto us
What shall happen:
Declare ye the former things, what they be,
That we may consider them,

And know the latter end of them;
Or shew us things for to come.
23. Declare the things that are to come hereafter,
That we may know that ye are gods:

Yea, do good, or do evil,
That we may [2] be dismayed, and [3] behold it together.
24. [4] Behold, ye are of nothing,
And your work is nought:
An abomination is he that chooseth you.

[1] Gr. Syr. Tar. Vg. *draw near.* [2] m. *look one upon another.* [3] A Heb. variant, *fear.* [4] Gr. *we shall behold together whence ye are and whence your work.*

predict the future, in particular the advent of Cyrus (25–29), and which therefore establishes the exclusive divinity of Israel's God.

21. **Produce your cause**, addressed to the heathen gods (vs. 23), whose worshippers are also present (vs. 29).

22 f. The last two clauses of vs. 22 should be transposed:

Or the things to come let us hear,
That we may mark the issue of them.

Do good or evil, *i.e.* anything, something. **Be dismayed**, etc.: *i.e. look on it with astonishment.*

"The false gods may mention either predictions of past events, which were duly fulfilled, or predictions of future events, the *issue* of which Jehovah and His followers will carefully mark. Or lastly, let them give any proof that they like of their ability to act." — CHEYNE.

24. A dead silence follows the challenge. The gods have nothing to say; therefore they are **of nothing**, nonentities, not gods at all (vs. 23).

25. I have raised up one from the north, and he is come;
From the rising of the sun one that calleth upon my name:
And he shall come upon rulers as upon mortar,
And as the potter treadeth clay.

26. Who hath declared it from the beginning, that we may know?
And beforetime, that we may say, "He is righteous"?
Yea, there is none that declareth, yea, there is none that sheweth,
Yea, there is none that heareth your words.

27. *I* first *will say* unto Zion, "Behold, behold them":
And I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

No Heathen God, but Jehovah alone, predicted the Advent of Cyrus (vss. 25–29)

The general ignorance of the future displayed by the heathen gods (21–24) is illustrated by their particular ignorance of Cyrus.

25. **One**, Cyrus; from the *north* and *east*, practically = the northeast. **That calleth upon my name**, *i.e.* in worship; this, of course, is an ideal representation. To the idealism of our prophet it is natural that Cyrus, who at the beginning of his career was ignorant of Jehovah (45:4), should finally acknowledge him as the author of his success. Perhaps, however, we should read, by a very simple change, *I will call him by his name;* this would bring the passage into complete accord with 45:4. **He shall come upon**: read, *that he may trample upon* (cf. 40:23).

26. No heathen god had foretold the advent of Cyrus. **Righteous** should be *right*, *i.e.* in his prediction.

27. **Will give** should be *gave*. The **bringer of good tidings** is the prophet himself (cf. 40:9), who was a veritable *gift of God* to Jerusalem; he was the first to explain the meaning of Cyrus. The first half of this verse is very obscure; perhaps originally, *I announced it in advance unto Zion.*

28. And when I look, there is no man ;
Even among them there is no counsellor,

That, when I ask of them, can answer a word.
29. Behold, [1] all of them,
Their works are vanity *and* nought.
Their molten images are wind and confusion.

The Servant (Israel), His Task and Destiny (42 : 1–44 : 23)

The Servant's Task (42 : 1–9)

42. Behold, [2] my servant, whom I uphold ; Mat. 12 : 18-20
[3] My chosen, in whom my soul delighteth :

[1] m. *they are all vanity: their works are nought.* [2] Gr. adds *Jacob.* [3] Gr. adds *Israel.*

28 f. For **look**, read *looked;* for **no man**, *none;* further *was, asked, could answer.* The gods were dumb; therefore, as before (vs. 24), they are proved nonentities.

This dispute between Jehovah and the gods is thoroughly dramatic. Particularly effective is the helpless silence that follows Jehovah's challenge of them. And the conclusion of the whole matter is that they are nothing, while he is everything, and he may therefore well be trusted by his downcast people.

42 : 1–44 : 23. Now that the power of God to deliver Israel has been persuasively set forth (Chap. 40), and the conquering Cyrus has been interpreted as the human agent of that deliverance (Chap. 41), it is fitting that the real meaning and purpose of it should be explained. Israel, the nation, is Jehovah's servant (41 : 8), and she is delivered in order to perform the high task of bringing the true religion, which she alone possesses — for there is no God like hers (41 : 29) — to the whole world.

42 : 1–4. This is the first of the four songs (49 : 1–6; 50 : 4–9; 52 : 13–53 : 12) whose theme is the Servant of Jehovah. Whether in these songs the servant was originally an individual or the nation in its ideal capacity (see pp. 250 ff.), in their present setting the national interpretation is obligatory. *Israel* is the servant, as expressly stated in 41 : 8, and as the Greek version also reads here (42 : 1).

1. **Behold** : for **my servant** (Jehovah is speaking) is a fact

I have put my spirit upon him;
He shall bring forth judgement to the [1] Gentiles.

2. He shall not cry, nor lift up,
Nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.
3. A bruised reed shall he not break,
And the [2] smoking flax shall he not quench:

He shall bring forth judgement in truth.
4. He shall not [3] fail nor be [4] discouraged,
Till he have set judgement in the earth;
And the isles shall wait for his law.

5. Thus saith God the LORD,
He that created the heavens, and stretched them forth;

[1] m. *nations*. [2] m. SV *dimly burning wick*. [3] m. Heb. *burn dimly*. [4] m. Heb. *bruised*.

worthy of the greatest attention (cf. 41:29). He is **chosen** (41:8) by his God and equipped with the **spirit**, like a prophet, for his task of carrying **judgment** (practically = *religion* on its civic side) to the world. In other words, Israel is to be a missionary people.

2. His methods are to be unsensational. Noise and self-advertisement are unseemly and unnecessary in one who is conscious of being *upheld* and *inspired* (vs. 1) by an omnipotent God.

3. Those whose power is bent and broken he lifts up; smouldering hope he fans into a flame, by his *faithful* proclamation of the true religion (**judgment**, cf. vs. 1). **In truth**, *i.e.* faithfully. The **reed** and the **flax** are the heathen (vss. 1, 4) who are revived by Israel's message.

4. The translation **fail** and **be discouraged** misses a fine point in the original, which echoes the words of the previous verse (see margin, *burn dimly, be bruised*). The servant is a reed not bruised, but erect; a wick not dim, but brightly burning; and he continues his religious work till it is effectively established throughout the whole world.

These words, suggesting the gentleness, the serenity, the tenderness, and the triumph of the servant's work are very happily applied by Matthew (12:17–21) to our Lord.

5. The omnipotence of Jehovah is the guarantee that he will carry his servant's work to complete success.

He that spread abroad the earth and that which cometh out of it;
He that giveth breath unto the people upon it,
And spirit to them that walk therein:

6. I the LORD have called thee in righteousness,
And will hold thy hand,
And will [1] keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people,
For a light of the Gentiles;

7. To open the blind eyes,
To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
And them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

8. I am the LORD;
That is my name:
And my glory will I not give to another,
Neither my praise unto graven images.

9. Behold, the former things are come to pass,
And new things do I declare:

[1] m. *form*; Gr. *strengthen*.

6. **In righteousness**, *i.e.* in accordance with my purpose. **The people**, as in vs. 5, the people upon the earth, *i.e.* humanity = **the Gentiles**. In Israel, God's **covenant** with humanity, his true relation with man, is embodied, incarnate; in her the divine **light** that is to lighten the Gentiles is shining.

7. **To open**: read, *opening*. The **blind** and the **prisoners** are probably the heathen (cf. vss. 1, 4, 6), though a reference to Israel herself is not necessarily excluded (cf. vss. 18, 20).

8. Jehovah's **name**, his honor, his **glory** are bound up with the success of Israel's mission. If Israel fails, Jehovah is no better than other gods.

9. **The former things**, the victorious career of Cyrus (41: 25–29). **New things**, the impending emancipation of Israel, with its vast

Before they spring forth
I tell you of them.

The New Song (42 : 10–13)

10. Sing unto the LORD a new song,
And his praise from the end of the earth;
Ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein,
The isles, and the inhabitants thereof.

11. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof [1] lift up *their voice,*
The villages that Kedar doth inhabit;
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top of the mountains.

12. Let them give glory unto the LORD,
And declare his praise in the islands.

13. The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man;
He shall stir up [2] jealousy like a man of war:
He shall cry, yea, he shall [3] shout aloud;
He shall do mightily against his enemies.

[1] Gr. Tar. *rejoice.* [2] m. *zeal;* SV his *zeal.* [3] Gr. *shall shout against his enemies with strength.*

spiritual consequences for the world. This prophecy will be fulfilled as surely as the other.

10–13. The whole world is concerned in the deliverance of Israel, and is therefore summoned to sing **a new song** for this new and wonderful experience. For **ye that go down to the sea**, read *let the sea roar.* **Kedar**, an Arabian tribe. For **Sela**, the capital of Edom, perhaps we should read with AV *the rock* (*i.e.* cliffs, in contrast to the mountains). The reason for this universal joy is that Jehovah, in his warlike zeal, is taking the field, in the person of Cyrus, **against his enemies**, *i.e.* the Babylonians.

Jehovah at last bestirs Himself (42 : 14–17)

14. [1] I have long time holden my peace ;
I have been still, and refrained myself :
Now will I cry out like a travailing woman ;
I will gasp and pant together.

15. I will make waste mountains and hills,
And dry up all their herbs ;
And I will make the rivers islands,
And will dry up the pools.

16. And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not ;
In paths that they know not will I lead them :
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.

These things will I do,
[2] And I will not forsake them.

17. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images,
That say unto molten images, "Ye are our gods."

A Call for Responsiveness on Israel's Part (42 : 18–25)

18. Hear, ye deaf ;
And look, ye blind, that ye may see.

[1] Gr. *I have been silent; shall I also be for ever silent?* [2] m. *and will not forbear.*

14–17. Jehovah, who has long been silent, inactive (perhaps since 701 B.C., when he delivered Jerusalem from Sennacherib), now **pants** to do something for Israel. He will work havoc for her enemies (vs. 15), and lead her, **blind** as she is, across the dark desert to the home land. *These things will I surely do, and not leave undone* (vs. 16); and then will be seen the folly of trusting any other god but him. For **islands** (vs. 15) read perhaps *dry land*.

18. Israel, as a whole, is still **deaf** and **blind**. She fails to read,

19. Who is blind, but my [1] servant?
Or deaf, as [2] my messenger that I send?
Who is blind as he that is [3] at peace *with me*,
And blind as the LORD'S servant?

20. [4] Thou seest many things, but thou observest not;
[5] His ears are open, but he heareth not.
21. It pleased the LORD, for his righteousness' sake,
To [6] magnify the law, and make it honourable.

22. But this is a people robbed and spoiled;
They are all of them snared in holes,
And they are hid in prison houses:
They are for a prey, and none delivereth;
For a spoil, and none saith, "Restore."

23. Who is there among you that will give ear to this?
That will hearken and hear for the time to come?

[1] Gr. *servants.* [2] Gr. *their rulers.* [3] m. *made perfect,* or *recompensed;* AV *perfect.* [4] Gr. *ye saw . . . observed not . . . heard not.* [5] Gr. *the.* [6] m. *make the teaching great and glorious.*

as this great prophet so clearly does, the signs of the times; she does not understand that Jehovah is panting to deliver her (vss. 14–17).

19. This verse, which interrupts the direct appeal in vss. 18, 20, and is explanatory of vs. 18, may originally have been briefer: *Who is blind, but my servant, and deaf, as mine emissary?* The word **he that is at peace with me** is obscure, and perhaps should be (by the change of a single letter) *he that is sent.*

20. For **his** and **he**, perhaps *thine* and *thou.* Israel has no real power of observation, no ear for the voice of God in contemporary history.

21 f. Read, with margin, *make the teaching*, perhaps the prophetic teaching, *great and glorious.* But to this, as to the teaching of history, Israel is irresponsive, made dull and desperate by her misery, which is figuratively described in vs. 22.

23–25. An appeal to Israel to learn, with a view to the future, to

24. Who gave Jacob [1] for a spoil,
And Israel to the robbers?
Did not the LORD? he against whom we have sinned,
And in whose ways they would not walk,
Neither were they obedient unto his law.

25. Therefore he poured upon him the fury of his anger,
And the strength of battle;
And it set him on fire round about, yet he knew not;
And it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

Jehovah will show his Love for Israel by gathering her Exiles Home (43:1–7)

43. But now thus saith the LORD
That created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee,
O Israel:
Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;
I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.

[1] Heb. variant, *to the plunderer.*

recognize Jehovah's hand and purpose in these her sorrows of spoliation and captivity. It was he, though Israel knew it not (vs. 25), *who gave Jacob to the spoilers and Israel to the robbers, and who poured out upon him his anger, and the violence of war*, here described as a flaming fire. For several reasons, vs. 24 — from *did not the LORD* to the end — appears to be a later insertion, interrupting 24a and 25 (which really begins with *and*, not **therefore**), and introducing a somewhat irrelevant idea; here it is rather sharpened eyes than a sharpened conscience that the prophet desiderates. *Who gave Jacob to the spoiler, and Israel to the robbers, and poured upon him the fury of his anger?*

43:1–7. Israel's irresponsiveness has not dimmed Jehovah's love for her; "thou art mine." So again comes the assurance that he will ransom her, and bring her scattered children home.

1 f. **Now**, in contrast to the misery which has just been described (42:18–25), Israel's *creator* will show himself as her *redeemer:* therefore **fear not. Called thee by thy name**, as my

2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with
thee;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee:
When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be
burned;
Neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3. For I am the LORD thy God,
The Holy One of Israel, thy saviour:
I have given Egypt as thy ransom,
Ethiopia and [1] Seba for thee.

4. Since thou hast been precious in my sight,
And honourable, and I have loved thee;
Therefore will I give men for thee,
And peoples for thy life.

5. Fear not; for I am with thee:
I will bring thy seed from the east,
And gather thee from the west;
6. I will say to the north, Give up;
And to the south, Keep not back;

Bring my sons from far,
And my daughters from the end of the earth;

[1] Gr. *Soene* (= Syene or Assouan).

favorite and friend; and in the gravest perils (*water* and *fire*) thou shalt be sure of my presence and protection (cf. Ps. 91).

3 f. **Thy ransom**: as the price paid for the emancipation of Israel, Cyrus is here represented as being rewarded with the conquest of rich and distant lands (Ps. 72: 10). For **men** (vs. 4) read, by a simple change, *lands*. **Seba**, in the north of **Ethiopia**.

5–7. Israel is scattered throughout the world — east, west, north, and south; and Jehovah's **glory** will be manifested historically by bringing them back home. He cares not only for

7. Every one that is called by my name,
And whom I have created for my glory; I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Israel is Jehovah's Witness to the World (43:8–13)

8. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,
And the deaf that have ears.
9. [1] Let all the nations be gathered together,
And let the peoples be assembled:

Who among them can declare this,
And shew us former things?
Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified:
Or let them hear, and say, "It is truth."

[1] Heb. Gr. *all the nations have been gathered together.*

the nation as a whole, but for the individuals; they are his dear **sons** and **daughters** (cf. 1:2). For **I have formed**, etc., read simply, *formed and made.*

43:8–13. Here, as before (41:1–4, 21–28) is a judgment scene. The nations are gathered in court (vs. 9), and Israel testifies to the uniqueness of her God. He and he alone has both foretold and effected this great salvation for her; therefore he is God alone.

8. The **blind** and **deaf** are Israel (42:18 f.); yet, though blind and deaf to the *meaning* of her history, she nevertheless has **eyes** and **ears**, and cannot refuse her testimony to the *facts* themselves — the facts especially (*a*) of the prediction of this deliverance (cf. 41:22), and (*b*) of the deliverance itself, which is imminent

9. Read: *the nations are gathered, the peoples assembled*, in court for the trial between their gods and Israel's. But none of the heathen gods has shown the power to **declare this** deliverance *in advance* (read thus, instead of *former things*); and they have no witnesses to corroborate their statement, and say, **It is true** (cf. 41:26).

10. Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD,
And my servant whom I have chosen:
That ye may know and believe me,
And understand that I am he:

Before me there was no god formed,
Neither shall there be after me.
11. I, even I, am the LORD;
And beside me there is no saviour.

12. I have declared, and I have saved,
And I have shewed,
And there was no strange *god* among you:
Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD.

And I am God.
13. Yea, [1] since the day was I am he;
And there is none that can deliver out of my hand:
I will work, and who shall [2] let it?

The Deliverance from Babylon more Wonderful than the Deliverance from Egypt (43 : 14–21)

14. Thus saith the LORD,
Your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

[1] m. *from this day forth I*, etc.; Gr. Tar. Vg. *from everlasting.* [2] m. *reverse*; SV *can hinder.*

10. The nations, thus challenged, are silent. Jehovah, however, has a witness in Israel; **YE are my witnesses and servants.** Probably the following verbs should be read in the third person: *that they* (*i.e.* the heathen) *should know and believe me*, etc. The object of Israel's testimony is to convince the world that her God is the only God, and to lead the nations to faith in him.

13 (with last clause of vs. 12). Read:

I am God (from of old).
Yea from now I am ever the same.

For your sake I have sent to Babylon,
And I will bring down [1] all of them as fugitives,

Even the Chaldeans,
[2] In the ships of their rejoicing.
15. I am the LORD, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your King.

16. Thus saith the LORD,
Which maketh a way in the sea,
And a path in the mighty waters:

17. Which bringeth forth the chariot and horse,
The army and the power;
They lie down together, they shall not rise;
They are extinct, they are quenched as [3] flax.

18. Remember ye not the former things,
Neither consider the things of old.
19. Behold, I will do a new thing;
Now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it?

[1] m. AV *all their nobles.* [2] AV *whose cry* is *in the ships;* Gr. (*and the Chaldeans*) *shall be bound in ships.* [3] m. SV *a wick.*

Let: read with margin, *reverse.* The purpose of the eternal God is triumphant and irreversible (cf. 14: 27).

43: 14–21. The ancient deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian horsemen at the Red Sea will be transcended by this new and more wonderful deliverance from Babylon.

14. The detail of this verse is unfortunately so obscure that we are obliged to be content with the general sense, which appears to be an announcement of the impending fall of Babylon.

16 f. The **sea** is the Red Sea, the **chariot** and **horse** are those of the Egyptians.

18 f. Those **former things** — the defeat of Pharaoh and the passage through the sea — are hardly worth remembering in comparison with the **new thing** (the overthrow of Babylon, and the *way through the wilderness* to the home land) which is about

I will even make a way in the wilderness,
And rivers in the desert.
20. The beasts of the field shall honour me,
The jackals and the ostriches:

Because I give waters in the wilderness,
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to my people, my chosen:
21. The people which I formed for myself,
[1] That they might set forth my praise.

Israel's Restoration is Due not to her Own Merits, but to Jehovah's Free Grace (43 : 22–44 : 5)

22. [2] Yet thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob;
But thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.
23. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings;
Neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices.

[1] m. *they shall set forth.* [2] Gr. *not now have I called thee, O Jacob, or wearied thee, O Israel.*

to **spring forth** from the success of Cyrus. **Shall ye not know it?** *do ye not recognize it?*

20 f. The very beasts will honor Jehovah for this glorious transformation of the wilderness. The last half of vs. 20, which but repeats 19b, besides giving it a prosaic turn, may, with vs. 21, be a later insertion.

The wonderful way across the desert is a favorite theme of this prophecy.

43 : 22–44 : 5. The imminent emancipation and restoration of Israel are not a reward for her fidelity to Jehovah. She had brought him no offering — nothing but a long record of sin: it is only of his free grace that Jehovah forgives and restores her. The argument of the section recalls 42 : 18–43 : 7.

22. Jehovah had called Israel (vs. 1), but Israel had not called upon Jehovah, *nor hast thou wearied thyself about me.*

23 f. Israel had brought no offering or sacrifice to Jehovah during

I have not made thee to serve with [1] offerings,
Nor wearied thee with frankincense.
24. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money,
Neither hast thou [2] filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices:

But thou hast made me to serve with thy sins,
Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.
25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions
[3] for mine own sake;
And I will not remember thy sins.

26. Put me in remembrance; let us plead together:
Set thou forth *thy cause*, that thou mayest be justified.
27. [4] Thy first father sinned,
And thine [5] interpreters have transgressed against me.

[1] m. *a meal-offering.* [2] m. *satiated;* Gr. (*neither have I*) *desired.* [3] Some Gr. MSS. om. [4] Gr. *your first fathers.* [5] SV *teachers.*

the exile — indeed, away from the temple, she could not — nor had Jehovah made any such demand upon her. No opinion for or against the efficacy of sacrifice is here expressed (cf. 1:11 ff.); it is simply a conceivable way of serving Jehovah. Instead, however, of serving him, she had, by reason of her sins, made him serve her, her guilt imposing upon him the burden of punishing her by exile, and the task of restoring her again.

25. The fact that their *transgressions are being blotted out* is attested by the impending deliverance. This happens, not for their merits, but **for mine own sake**, *i.e.* of his own free grace. **I** emphatically repeated.

26. Israel is summoned to **set forth**, or rather *count up* (her claims to merit); but she is ominously silent (cf. end of vs. 24) — there has been sin from the beginning (vs. 27).

27. **Thy first father**, Jacob. **Thine interpreters**, the false prophets.

28. Therefore I [1] will profane [2] the princes of the sanctuary,
And I [3] will make Jacob a [4] curse,
And Israel a reviling.

44. Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant;
And Israel, whom I have chosen:
2. Thus saith the LORD that made thee,
And formed thee from the womb, who will help thee:

Fear not, O Jacob my servant;
And thou, [5] Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.
3. For I will pour water upon [6] him that is thirsty,
And streams upon the dry ground:

I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,
And my blessing upon thine offspring:
4. And they shall spring up [7] among the grass,
As willows by the watercourses.

5. One shall say, "I am the LORD's";
And another shall call *himself* by the name of Jacob;

[1] m. AV *have profaned;* Gr. *the princes have profaned my holy things.* [2] m. *holy princes.* [3] m. *have* (so AV) *made.* [4] m. *devoted thing.* [5] Gr. Syr. and some Heb. MSS. *Israel.* [6] m. *the thirsty* land. [7] Gr. *as grass among water.*

28. For the first clause, which is not very satisfactory, following the Greek version we may read, *Thy princes profaned my sanctuary* (cf. Ezek. 8 : 5–18). For **And I will make**, etc., read, *so I gave up Jacob to the ban, and Israel to reviling.*

44 : 1. **Now**, in contrast to the sin and misery just described (cf. 43 : 1).

2. **Jeshurun**, a rare name for Israel (Deut. 32 : 15).

3. In exile, Israel is as a *thirsty land* that needs the refreshing showers. The divine **spirit** is the source of the **blessing**, which here covers material as well as spiritual welfare.

4. **They shall spring up** fair and abundant, *as grass among waters* (so Gr.).

5. So wonderful will be their prosperity (the *blessing*, vs. 3) that **one**, **and another**, **and another** — members of other nations and worshippers of other gods — will wish to **call himself by the**

And another shall [1] subscribe with his hand unto the LORD,
And [2] surname *himself* by the name of Israel.

Israel's God is Sovereign and Eternal (44:6–8)

6. Thus saith the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his redeemer the LORD of hosts:
I am the first, and I am the last;
And beside me there is no God.

Rev. 1:17; 22:13

7. [3] And who, as I, shall call,
And shall declare it, and set it in order for me,

[1] m. *write on his hand, Unto the LORD.* [2] m. *give for a title the name of Israel.* [3] Gr. *Who is like me? let him stand, and call and declare, and prepare for me from the time that I made man for ever.*

name of Jacob (*i.e.* join the commonwealth of Israel), and call Israel's God his own. One will **inscribe his hand** — a reminiscence of the ancient tattoo — with the words **To Jehovah**, indicating his new lord, **and assume the** honorable **surname** of **Israel**.

This verse suggests the effect which the redemption of Israel is to have upon the world. Proselytes will be won.

44:6–8. The conspicuous greatness of Israel's blessing (vss. 3–5) brings up the familiar thought of the lonely greatness of Israel's God (vss. 6–8).

6. Jehovah is **king** (43:15) and (for the first time in this prophecy) **Jehovah of hosts,** with reference perhaps to the imminent overthrow of mighty Babylon through Cyrus (vs. 28). He is **the first** and **the last**, *i.e.* the *eternal* God, the *only* God (cf. 43:10 f.).

7. Read, with the help of the Greek version in the first half, and of a brilliant emendation of Oort's in the second half of the verse:

Who is like me? let him stand forth and cry,
Let him declare it, and set it in order before me.
Who hath announced from of old things future?
And what is to come, let them declare to us.

It is the same sort of challenge of the heathen and their gods, and the same emphasis on prediction, as in 41:21 f.

Since I appointed the ancient people? and the things
that are coming,
And that shall come to pass, let them [1] declare.

8. Fear ye not, neither be afraid:
Have I not declared unto [2] thee of old, and shewed
it?
And ye are my witnesses. Is there a God beside me?
Yea, there is no Rock; I know not any.

The Folly of Idolatry (44:9–20)

9. They that fashion a graven image are all of them
[3] vanity;
And their delectable things shall not profit:
And their own witnesses see not, nor know;
That they may be ashamed.
10. Who hath fashioned a god, or molten a graven image
That is profitable for nothing?

[1] Heb. (*declare*) *unto them*; Gr. *to you*; Tar. *to us*. [2] Gr. *you*. [3] Heb. *chaos*.

8. Israel is Jehovah's **witness**, as in 43:10. The last words should probably read, *Is there any God or Rock besides me?*

44:9–20. The powerful emphasis in vss. 6–8 on the greatness of Jehovah has led to the insertion of an elaborate passage on the folly of idolatry, which is exposed in a grimly humorous and scornful description of the process of idol manufacture (cf. 40:18–20; 41:6 f.).

The Uselessness of the Idols and the Stupidity of Those who make Them (vss. 9–11)

9. **Their delectable things**, the idols. **Their witnesses** (omit **own**), *i.e.* their worshippers (cf. vs. 8), have no perception, are stupid, with the result that they will be *put to shame*.

10. Perhaps a statement rather than a question. *Any one who* in his folly imagines that he *has fashioned a god*, will find to his cost that he *has* really done nothing but *cast a graven image that is utterly useless*.

11. Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed;
And the workmen, they are of men:
Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up;
They shall fear, they shall be ashamed together.
12. The smith [1] *maketh* an axe, and worketh in the coals,
And fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with his strong arm:
Yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and is faint.
13. The carpenter stretcheth out a line;
He marketh it out with [2] a pencil; he shapeth it with planes,
And he marketh it out with the compasses,
And shapeth it after the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man, to [3] dwell in the house.
14. [4] He heweth him down cedars,
And taketh the holm tree and the oak,

[1] Gr. *sharpens.* [2] m. *red ochre.* [3] Gr. *set.* [4] Gr. *He cuts wood out of the thicket which the Lord planted,* even *a pine, and the rain,* etc.

11. Perhaps:

Behold, all his charmers will be put to shame,
And his enchanters will be confounded (Cheyne).

Even all their combined skill could lead to no other result.

The Manufacture (vss. 12 f.)

The smith (contrasted with **the carpenter,** vs. 13) **works with the coals** (omit *an axe, and*). The process of fabricating his god makes him hungry and thirsty. **House**, perhaps a private house or chapel.

Securing the Material for a Wooden Idol (vss. 14–17)

14. Read, (*He went*) *to cut the wood for his use, choosing a plane or an oak.* For **he planteth a fir tree**, etc., read, *which the Lord*

And strengtheneth for himself one among the trees of the forest:
He planteth a [1] fir tree, and the rain doth nourish it.
15. Then shall it be for a man to burn:
And he taketh thereof, and warmeth himself;
Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread:
Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it;
He maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.
16. He burneth [2] part thereof in the fire;
With [2] part thereof he [3] eateth flesh;
He roasteth roast, and is satisfied:
Yea, he warmeth himself, and saith,
"Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire":
17. And the residue thereof he maketh a god,
Even his graven image: he falleth down unto it
And worshippeth, and prayeth unto it,
And saith, "Deliver me; for thou art my god."
18. They know not, neither do they consider:
For he hath [4] shut their eyes, that they cannot see;
And their hearts, that they cannot understand.
19. And none calleth to mind,
Neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say,

[1] m. *ash.* [2] m. *the half.* [3] Gr. *bakes loaves on the coals and roasts flesh thereon and eats and is satisfied.* [4] Heb. *daubed.*

planted (so Gr.), *i.e.* a natural tree (cf. Ps. 104:16), *and the rain nourished.*

16 f. **With part thereof**: read with Gr. *on the coals thereof. He roasts flesh, he eats the roast* (roasting before eating; transpose the verbs). **I have seen the fire**, *I feel the glow.* He prays to the *useless* image (cf. vss. 9 f.).

The Stupidity of Idolaters (vss. 18–20)

18 f. It must be incurable stupidity (cf. vs. 9) which blinds one to the absurdity of making a god to be worshipped out of scraps of

"I have burned part of it in the fire;
Yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof;
I have roasted flesh and eaten it:
And shall I make the residue thereof an abomination?
Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"

20. He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside,
That he cannot deliver his soul, nor say,
"Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

Let the World rejoice over Israel's Redemption (44:21–23)

21. Remember these things, O Jacob;
And Israel, for thou art my servant:
I have formed thee; thou art my servant:
O Israel, thou shalt not [1] be forgotten of me.

22. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions,
And, as a cloud, thy sins:
Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

23. Sing, O ye heavens, for the LORD hath done it;
Shout, ye lower parts of the earth;

[1] Gr. *forget me.*

wood left over from burning and baking. The whole passage is full of remorseless irony. **Abomination**, *i.e.* abominable idol.

20. **He feedeth on ashes**, etc.: rather *as for the man who delighteth in ashes* (*i.e.* in wooden, combustible idols, 15 ff.) *a deluded heart has misled him*, so that he can neither save himself, as he had hoped to do (vs. 17), nor even understand that he is clinging to a delusion.

21. **These things**, Jehovah's greatness and power to predict the future (vss. 6–8). **Be forgotten of**: perhaps *renounce.*

23. A glad appeal to nature to break into song over the redemption of Israel. With this little burst of joy, the passage descriptive of the high destiny of the Servant concludes (42:1–44:23).

Break forth into singing, ye mountains,
O forest, and every tree therein :
For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob,
And will glorify himself in Israel.

CYRUS AND THE OVERTHROW OF BABYLON (44 : 24–48 : 22)

Jehovah calls Cyrus and bestows upon him a Career of Victory, for Israel and the World's Sake (44 : 24–45 : 8)

24. Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer,
And he that formed thee from the womb :
I am the LORD, that maketh all things ;
That stretcheth forth the heavens alone ;

In this section the nation has repeatedly come before us in a double capacity : on the one hand, the people are blind and deaf, robbed and spoiled, sinful and irresponsive ; on the other, they are servants and witnesses, precious and beloved, redeemed and restored, the wonder of the world. Striking contrasts abound — Israel as she is and as she is to be, her present misery and the glorious redemption that is about to break, her present apathy and the sense of her great destiny which is so profoundly to affect the world. And behind all her changing fortunes is her unchanging God, *the First and the Last: I am He.*

44 : 24–48 : 22. In this section Cyrus is the centre of interest as the Servant was in the last. Israel has been assured that, despite her sin and blindness, her redemption is nigh. Her true Redeemer is Jehovah, but Cyrus is the human agent through whom he works — his *Friend* and *Anointed* (or *Messiah*) as the prophet boldly calls him. His victories, most of all his impending victory over Babylon, which will procure the emancipation and restoration of Israel, constitute a signal contribution to Jehovah's purpose for the world, which, through Israel, is to be brought to a saving knowledge of himself. Without Cyrus this consummation is impossible.

24. The introductory description of Jehovah as the maker of all things, and the Lord of history (vs. 26), leads to a fine climax in the announcement of the name of Cyrus (vs. 28). Who is with me? read *was*.

That spreadeth abroad the earth;
[1] Who is with me?
25. That frustrateth the tokens of the [2] liars,
And maketh diviners mad;

That turneth wise men backward,
And maketh their knowledge foolish:
26. That confirmeth the word of his [3] servant,
And performeth the counsel of his messengers,

That saith of Jerusalem, "She shall be inhabited";
And of the cities of Judah, "They shall be built,
And I will raise up the waste places thereof":

27. That saith to the deep, "Be dry,
And I will dry up thy rivers":
28. That [4] saith of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd,
And shall perform all my pleasure":
Even saying of Jerusalem, "She shall be built";
And to the temple, "Thy foundation shall be laid."

[1] Heb. variant, AV *by myself*. [2] m. *boasters*. [3] One Gr. MS. Tar. *servants*. [4] Gr. *biddeth Cyrus be wise*.

25 f. **Tokens of the liars**, omens of the Babylonian astrologers. In contrast to these are the **servants** (rather than *servant*) and **messengers** of Israel, *i.e.* the prophets, whose words are confirmed by Jehovah. Many scholars believe that the last half of vs. 28 is a variant to the last half of vs. 26, which, completed with the help of vs. 28, should therefore run:

Who says of Jerusalem: Let her be inhabited!
And of the Temple: Be thy foundation laid!
And of the cities of Judah: Let them be built!
And the ruins thereof I will raise.

27. **The deep . . . rivers**, symbolic of the difficulties to be encountered.

28. **Shepherd**, *i.e.* ruler: but more probably we should point to read the more august title *my Friend*. It is this foreigner who

45. Thus saith the [1] LORD
To his anointed, to Cyrus,
Whose right hand I have holden,
To subdue nations before him,
And I will loose the loins of kings;

To open the doors before him,
And the gates shall not be shut;
2. "I will go before thee,
And [2] make the rugged places plain:

I will break in pieces the doors of brass,
And cut in sunder the bars of iron:
3. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
And hidden riches of secret places,
That thou mayest know that I am the [1] LORD,
Which call thee by thy name even the God of Israel.

[1] Gr. *Lord God.* [2] Gr. *level mountains.*

has been chosen to *perform Jehovah's purpose* — the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the temple.

45:1. Cyrus is not only Jehovah's *Friend*, but his **Anointed** (Heb. *Messiah*), *i.e.* dedicated by him to a special mission. The mission was the emancipation of Israel (vs. 4), ultimately the salvation of the world (vss. 22, 6); and to this end a victorious career was necessary — *to subdue nations*. The **gates** are those of cities to be captured. The clause **I will loose the loins of kings**, *i.e.* ungird, disarm, defeat them, is more appropriately transferred to the beginning of 5b.

2. Cyrus is to be sustained (vs. 1) and accompanied in his career by Jehovah. **Doors of brass**, a possible allusion to Babylon with its hundred gates of brass.

3. **Treasures**: stored in dark and secret chambers. Cyrus was already master of the wealth of Crœsus, whom he had defeated, and was soon to be of Babylon: **for it is I, Jehovah, who calls thee by name** (omit *that thou mayest know*).

4. For Jacob my servant's sake,
And Israel my chosen,
I have called thee by thy name:
I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

5. I am the [1] LORD, and there is none else;
Beside me there is no God:
I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me:

6. That they may know from the rising of the sun,
And from the west,
That there is none beside me: I am the [1] LORD,
And there is none else.

7. I form the light, and create darkness;
I make peace, and create evil;
I am the [1] LORD,
That doeth all these things."

[1] Gr. *Lord God.*

4. Cyrus's call and victories are for Israel's sake — for her emancipation and restoration. For **have surnamed** (cf. 44:5) perhaps *delight in* (so Gr.) **Thou hast not known me**: Cyrus was not a Jehovah worshipper, but his victorious career is expected to bring him (cf. 41:25) in common with the rest of the world (vs. 6) to the recognition of Jehovah.

5 f. Before **I gird thee**, read *the loins of kings I ungird* (from vs. 1); they are defeated, he is victorious; and the ultimate, as opposed to the immediate (vs. 4), object of his victory is that the world from east to west may recognize that there is no God but Israel's God.

7. There are not two gods in the world — one presiding over light and good, the other over darkness and evil — there is only one, and that is Jehovah, the cause and maker of **all** things, and therefore of **these things**. **Peace**, welfare, good fortune; **evil**, calamity. The section ends, as it began (44:24), with the thought of God as the maker of all things.

8. Drop down, ye heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness:
Let the earth open,
That they may bring forth salvation,
And let her cause righteousness to spring up together;
I the LORD have created [1] it.

Murmurs against Cyrus Rebuked (45:9–13)

9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!
A potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!
Rom. 9:20 Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, "What makest thou?"
Or thy work, "He hath no hands?"
10. Woe unto him that saith unto a father, "What begettest thou?"
Or to a woman, "With what travailest thou?"

[2] Gr. *thee.*

8. The vision of a converted world causes the prophet to break into a little song of joy (cf. 44:23). The *righteousness* of heaven is answered by the *righteousness* of earth; there is, as it were, "a bridal of the earth and sky" (cf. Hos. 2:21 f.), so that upon the earth *salvation* and *peace* (as Duhm supplies; the verb is plural) spring up.

45:9–13. There must have been some Israelites to whom the titles of Jehovah's Friend and Anointed (44:28; 45:1) seemed much too extravagant an honor to confer upon a foreigner. Their national pride was insulted. Such murmurers are reminded that Jehovah, as the unchallengeable Sovereign and Creator of the world and men, has deliberately chosen Cyrus to execute his purpose of emancipating Israel.

9. Jehovah is the potter, Israel the clay; and it is for the potter to say how the clay is to be moulded. Israel has no right to murmur at Jehovah's choice of Cyrus. **Among**, *i.e.* no better than an earthen potsherd. **Thy work**, etc,: read *His work: thou hast no hands.*

11. Thus saith the [1]LORD,
The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
Ask me of the things that are to come;
Concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me.

12. I have made the earth,
And created man upon it:
I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens,
And all their host have I commanded.

13. I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will make straight all his ways;
He shall build my city,
And he shall let my exiles go free,
Not for price nor reward,
Saith the LORD of hosts.

The Heathen acknowledge the Uniqueness of Israel and her God (45 : 14–17)

14. Thus saith the [2]LORD,

[1] Gr. *Lord God.* [2] Gr. *Lord of hosts.*

11. Omit *concerning my sons*, as an erroneous explanation of *the work of my hands*, which really signifies the whole historical situation. Read:

Of things to come would ye question me?
Or concerning the work of my hands command me?

12 f. It is no less an one than the Creator of the world (vs. 12) that has raised up Cyrus as his instrument, and he has done this **in righteousness**, *i.e.* as was meet and right; hence the folly and impiety of Israel's murmurs. **Their host**, the stars. Cyrus's task is the emancipation and restoration of Israel. **My city**, Jerusalem (44 : 26). The clause *not for price nor reward*, which is

The labour of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia,
And the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine;
They shall go after thee; in chains they shall come over:

And they shall fall down unto thee,
They shall make supplication unto thee, *saying*,
"Surely God is in thee;
And there is none else, there is no God.

15. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself,
O God of Israel, the Saviour."

1 Cor. 14:25

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irrelevant, and inconsistent with 43:3, is regarded by some as a later insertion.

14. In this verse it is clear that the heathen pay some sort of homage to Israel, though it is difficult to be sure of the details. Our present text, which, from *shall come over* to *shall come over* is rather heavily weighted and redundant, represents Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba (or at least their wealth) as destined to belong to Israel — *they shall be thine* — for the clause *Surely God is in thee* shows that Israel is being addressed. But this is inconsistent with 43:3, which assigns these peoples to Cyrus. It is possible, as Cheyne and Marti believe, that this verse has been expanded, in the spirit of a somewhat later age (cf. 60:11; 61:5 f.), so as to suggest the idea that the wealth of the world shall one day belong to Israel, and that the original may have simply run:

Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: The exiles of Egypt,
And the captives of Ethiopia, and the Sabæans, men of stature,
Before thee shall pass, and to thee shall bow down, etc.

The confession of the heathen which begins with *Surely* continues to the end of vs. 17.

15 f. Read:

Verily with thee (*i.e.* Israel) *God hides himself, the God of Israel is a Saviour.*
Ashamed, yea, confounded, are all who rise up against Him (so Gr.).

These vss. acknowledge that Israel's God is the only true God, and suggest the complete collapse of the *idolatrous* religions. Israel holds the religious secret of the world (cf. 42:6).

16. They shall be ashamed, yea, confounded, all [1] of them,
[2] They shall go into confusion together that are
makers of idols.

17. *But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an everlasting salvation:
Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded
World without end.

Jehovah desires the Salvation of the whole World (45:18–25)

18. For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens;
He is God;
That formed the earth and made it;
He established it,
He created it not a [3] waste,
He formed it to be inhabited:
I am the LORD; and there is none else.

19. I have not spoken in secret,
In a place of the land of darkness;
I said not unto the seed of Jacob,
"Seek ye me [4] in vain":

[1] Gr. *that oppose him.* [2] Gr. *keep a feast of consecration to me, ye islands.* [3] Heb. *chaos.* [4] m. as *in a waste* (chaos; cf. vs. 18); Gr. (*seek*) *vanity: I, I am the Lord, who speak,* etc.

17. This deliverance of Israel, which has behind it such a God as Jehovah, is decisive for all time — not only the guarantee, but actually the beginning, of her Messianic age.

45:18–25. God's purpose, alike in nature (18), revelation (19) and history (22 f.), is beneficent — not waste and destruction, but life, salvation. All his action, alike in creation and history, is inspired by his love for men.

18. The world he created to be not a waste, but the home of saved men.

19. Though it is true that it is in Israel that Jehovah hides (and reveals) himself (vs. 15), his words within Israel, spoken by

I the LORD speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.

20. Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together,
Ye that are escaped of the nations:
They have no knowledge that carry
The wood of their graven image,
And pray unto a god
That cannot save.

21. Declare ye, and bring *it* forth;
Yea, let them take counsel together:
Who hath shewed this from ancient time?
Who hath declared it of old?
Have not I the LORD?
And there is none God else beside me.
A just God and a saviour;
There is none beside me.

22. Look unto me, and be ye saved,
All the ends of the earth:
For I am God, and there is none else.
23. By myself have I sworn,

---

his human representatives, the prophets, have not been obscure or mysterious, like the oracular utterances of the heathen, but clear, frank, and true — **righteousness** and **right**, *i.e.* words which are right and true, as the near future will show. **In vain**, "lit. *in chaos*, *i.e.* without definite guidance and without hope of result" (Skinner).

20 f. Another scene like 41 : 1–4. 21–29; 43 : 9–13. The futility of the heathen gods is proved by their inability to predict the future. Jeremiah and other prophets, in the inspiration of Jehovah, had predicted the exile and the restoration.

22–25. These verses form a magnificent climax to the poem on Cyrus beginning 44 : 24. They show Jehovah's real object, in the deliverance of Israel by Cyrus, to be the salvation of the whole world.

[1] The word is gone forth from my mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That unto me every knee shall bow, Rom. 14:11
Every tongue shall swear. Phil. 2:10f

24. Only in the LORD, shall one say unto me,
Is righteousness and strength:
Even to him shall men come,
And all they that were incensed against him shall be ashamed.
25. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel
Be justified, and shall glory.

The Downfall of Babylon's Gods (46:1–13)

46. Bel boweth down, [2] Nebo stoopeth;
Their idols are upon the beasts, and upon the cattle:

[1] m. *righteousness is gone forth from my mouth, a word which shall not return.* [2] Some Gr. MSS. read *Dagon.*

22 f. **The word . . . in righteousness**, *i.e.* a true word. Jehovah's unalterable purpose is to *save the whole world* (through the knowledge of him which redeemed Israel possesses, vs. 15), and in consequence to receive universal homage and worship; but it is for the individuals themselves to **look**, to *turn*, to him. **Shall swear**, *i.e.* allegiance to him.

24 f. This verse is somewhat obscure. The meaning appears to be:

Only through Jehovah has Jacob victories (lit. *righteousness*) *and strength;*
For his sake shall be put to confusion and shame all that were incensed against him.

Again we have the telling contrast (cf. 16 f.) between the gentile nations and Israel, with her wonderful God — Israel's triumph and joy in her God being specially emphasized in the concluding verse.

Chap. 46. To the ancient mind the overthrow of Babylon was equivalent to the overthrow of her gods. This chapter scornfully

The things that ye carried about are made a load, a
burden to the weary *beast.*

2. They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
But themselves are gone into captivity.

3. Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
Which have been borne *by me* from the belly,
Which have been carried from the womb.

4. And even to old age I am he,
And even to hoar hairs will I carry *you:*
I have made, and I will bear;
Yea, I will carry, and will deliver.

---

depicts their fate, and takes occasion to contrast their foolish impotence with the victorious power of Jehovah.

1. The gods are pictured as already prostrate. **Bel**, here = Merodach or Marduk, the patron God of Babylon; **Nebo**, his son, probably the patron of the dynasty (cf. *Nebu*chadrezzar). The **beasts** are beasts of burden, on whose *weary* backs the idols are packed for the flight. **Ye**, which must refer to the Babylonians, is here inapplicable in an address to Israel (cf. vs. 3). The verse, which is cumbrous in comparison with vs. 2, may originally have been briefer — thus:

Bel is bowed down, Nebo croucheth,
Their idols are consigned to the beasts,
Lifted up, laden on the weary.

2. The idea is that the gods could not save their own idols from the fate of captivity; they are simply "so much dead weight for weary beasts" (G. A. Smith).

3 f. What a contrast (cf. vs. 5) between those helpless gods and the God of Israel! *Their* people have to carry them, but *Israel's* God carries his people forever. Vs. 3 echoes vs. 1, and gives its thought a profound and brilliant turn, finely suggesting the *sustaining* power of true religion. For **I have made** read perhaps *I have borne.*

5. To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal,
And compare me, that we may be like?

6. Such as lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver in the balance,
They hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god;
They fall down, yea, they worship.

7. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him,
And set him in his place,
And he standeth; from his place shall he not remove:

Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer,
Nor save him out of his trouble.

8. Remember this, and [1] shew yourselves men:
Bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.

9. Remember the former things of old:
For I am God, and there is none else;
I am God, and there is none like me;

K. C. K.

[1] m. *stand fast;* Gr. *groan.*

6–8. In the spirit of 44:9–20, these vss. pour scornful sarcasm upon the idols. For certain reasons (cf. change of person from second to third, characterization of Israel as **transgressors** or *rebels*, vs. 8, whereas elsewhere she is Jehovah's *witness;* cf. 43:10, etc.), some recent scholars believe these verses to be an interpolation.

6 f. The **gold** and **silver** are not to pay the goldsmith; they are for use in the construction of the image, which is small enough to be *carried on the shoulder.* Once fixed in his place, the god can neither move nor speak, — stiff, mute, helpless, — a very scornful picture.

8. **Show yourselves men**, perhaps *acknowledge your guilt.*

9–11. **Former things**, deeds and especially predictions, which show that Jehovah alone is God. His irresistible will must be done, and it is done by calling Cyrus, the **ravenous bird**, who will swoop victorious like an eagle upon the prey. **The man of my counsel**, *i.e. who executes my counsel* (so A.V.).

10. Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not *yet* done;
Saying, My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all my pleasure;

11. Calling a ravenous bird from the east,
The man of my counsel from a far country;
Yea, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass;
I have purposed, I will also do it.

12. Hearken unto me, ye [1] stouthearted,
That are far from righteousness:
13. I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off,
And my salvation shall not tarry;
And I will [2] place salvation in Zion
For Israel my glory.

The Downfall of Babylon (47:1–15)

47. Come down, and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;

[1] Gr. *that have lost heart.* [2] m. *give salvation in Zion*, and *my glory unto Israel.*

12 f. With such a God, why should Israel faint or fear? **Stout-hearted**, rather *faint-hearted* (so Gr.). **Righteousness**, as so often in this prophecy, practically = victory, *salvation*. This is not, as they suppose, *far off*, but, through the victories of Cyrus, is *near*.

Chap. 47. This taunt-song on the downfall of Babylon appropriately follows the song on the downfall of her gods (Chap. 46). She is here portrayed as a haughty queen reduced to the condition of the meanest slave, and all her magicians and astrologers are powerless to save her.

The Humiliation of Babylon (vss. 1–4)

1 f. *Babylon* is herself the *virgin, tender and delicate*, once enthroned, now *throneless, sitting* in humiliation *on the ground*, and

Sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
For thou shalt no more be called
Tender and delicate.
2. Take the millstones, and grind meal:
Remove thy veil,
Strip off the train, uncover the leg,
Pass through the rivers.
3. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered,
Yea, thy shame shall be seen:
I will take vengeance, and will [1] accept no man.
4. [2] Our redeemer,
The LORD of hosts is his name,
The Holy One of Israel.

5. Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans:
For thou shalt no more be called
The Lady of Kingdoms.
6. I was wroth with my people,
I profaned mine inheritance,

[1] Heb. *meet;* SV *spare;* AV *I will not meet* thee as *a man;* Gr. *I will no more at all deliver* thee *to men.* [2] Some Gr. MSS. here read *saith.*

reduced to the position of the meanest maidservant, who *grinds the meal* (cf. Exod. 11:5). The **rivers** may be those passed on the way to exile, or the whole clause may suggest the degradations of her lot.

3 f. The first half of vs. 3 is probably a gloss on 2b, in the second half the text is obscure, and vs. 4 should be taken with 3, thus:

I will take irrevocable vengeance, saith our Redeemer.
Jehovah of hosts is his name, the holy One of Israel.

Babylon, the Proud and Cruel, laid Low (vss. 5–7)

5. **Darkness**, whether of dungeon or misery. **Lady**, mistress.
6. Jehovah permitted Babylon to chastise Israel because of

And gave them into thine hand:
Thou didst shew them no mercy;
Upon the aged hast thou
Very heavily laid thy yoke.

Rev. 18:7 7. And thou saidst, "I shall be
A lady for ever":
So that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart,
Neither didst remember the latter end thereof.

8. Now therefore hear this, thou that art given to pleasures,
That [1] dwellest carelessly,
That sayest in thine heart,
"I am, and there is none else beside me;
I shall not sit as a widow,
Neither shall I know the loss of children":

9. But these two things shall come to thee
In a moment, in one day,
The loss of children, and widowhood: [2] in their full measure
Shall they come upon thee,

[1] m. SV *sittest securely.* [2] Gr. Syr. *suddenly.*

her sin, but Babylon proved cruel, especially to the *aged* (Lam. 5:12).

7. Cruel, and *proud*, for she said, *I shall endure for ever, be mistress for aye.* **These things**, the fact that her power over Israel was only temporary, consequent upon Jehovah's anger (vs. 6), and that the **latter end**, *i.e.* the *issue* of it all, would be the restoration of Israel (cf. Jer. 29:11).

Babylon's Sudden Discomfiture (vss. 8–10a)

8. *Widowhood* and *bereavement:* desolation of the city, destruction or deportation of her people.

9. Babylon imagined her magicians could save her.

[1] Despite of the multitude of thy sorceries,
And the great abundance of thine enchantments.
10. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness;
Thou hast said, "None seeth me."

Thy wisdom and thy knowledge,
It hath perverted thee:
And thou hast said in thine heart,
"I am, and there is none else beside me."
11. Therefore shall evil come upon thee;
Thou shalt not know [2] the dawning thereof:
And mischief shall fall upon thee;
Thou shalt not be able to put it away:
And desolation shall come upon thee suddenly,
Which thou knowest not.
12. Stand now with thine enchantments,
And with the multitude of thy sorceries,
Wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth,

[1] m. *amidst;* SV *in.* [2] m. *how to charm it away.*

10. **For thou hast trusted**, read *and though thou didst feel secure.* **None**, especially no holy God.

Babylon's Magic Arts cannot save Her (vss. 10b–12)

10. Babylon's **wisdom** and **knowledge** of magic and sorcery (vs. 9) lulled her into a false security.

11. This very symmetrically built verse, which asserts the impotence of sorcery to ward off the impending calamity, offers a fine climax. After the last word, an infinitive seems necessary; *which thou knowest not* how to banish (by charm):

Calamity shall come upon thee, which thou hast no knowledge to charm away (see margin),
Destruction shall fall upon thee, which thou hast no power to appease,
Ruin shall suddenly come, which thou hast no knowledge to banish by charm.

12. An ironical challenge to the sorcerers. Omit *wherein . . . youth* (from vs. 15?). Read, *Perhaps thou* (*i.e.* through thy

If so be thou shalt be able to profit,
If so be thou mayest [1]prevail.

13. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels:
Let now the [2]astrologers,
The stargazers, the monthly prognosticators,
Stand up,
And save thee from the things
That shall come upon thee.
14. Behold, they shall be as stubble;
The fire shall burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not be a coal to warm at,
Nor a fire to sit before.
15. Thus shall the things be unto thee wherein thou hast laboured:
They that have trafficked with thee from thy youth

[1] m. *strike terror.* [2] Heb. *dividers of the heavens.*

sorcerers) *mayest somewhat avail, perhaps thou mayest strike terror* (so margin), *i.e.* into the demons that cause the calamity.

Astrologers, all, are Impotent: no Salvation possible for Babylon (vss. 13–15)

13. **Counsels**, perhaps *counsellors*. The order of RV is not accurate; read, *let them stand forth and save thee, the astrologers, the stargazers, those who make known each month whence (troubles) are coming.* Monthly almanacs were prepared which announced in advance lucky and unlucky days, etc. Another ironical challenge (cf. vs. 12).

14. The astrologers cannot save themselves, far less the city, from the fire which will consume her. Omit the last clause.

15. The *traffickers* are here irrelevant; it is the sorcerers (vs. 9) and astrologers (vs. 3) who are in question. Read:

Such are those become unto thee,
About whom thou didst trouble thyself from thy youth:
Staggering they flee, every man straight before him.
There is none that can save thee.

Shall wander every one to his quarter;
There shall be none to save thee.

The Summons to depart from Babylon (48:1–22)

48. Hear ye this, O house of Jacob,
Which are called by the name of Israel,
And are come forth [1] out of the waters of Judah;
Which swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But not in truth, nor in righteousness.
2. For they call themselves of the holy city,
And stay themselves upon the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts is his name.

[1] Gr. *from Judah.*

A fine picture of the headlong flight of those to whom Babylon had vainly looked to avert the disaster.

Chap. 48. This chapter, which closes the first great section of the prophecy, touches briefly upon its leading themes, — the argument from prophecy, the "former things" fulfilled and the "new thing" soon to be accomplished, the victories of Cyrus, the fall of Babylon, — and ends in an exultant appeal to Israel to leave Babylon, and then to tell the wondrous story of her redemption to the whole world.

There is much in the chapter which suggests the conclusion that the original message of the prophet has been touched, in later and very sorrowful times, by the hand of one whose view of Israel was much more severe than that of our prophet. Elsewhere in this prophecy the charge against her is chiefly apathy and want of faith; here it is disobedience and obstinacy.

The New Prophecies will be fulfilled as surely as the Old (vss. 1–11)

1 f. **This**, the message beginning with vs. 3. **Waters**, perhaps *loins*. **Swear by the name of**, own allegiance to. **Make mention of**, practically = worship. **The holy city**, Jerusalem. The religious insincerity implied by vss. 1b, 2 seems to betray the later hand; so also the obstinacy of vs. 4.

3. I have declared the former things from of old;
Yea, they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them:
Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.
4. Because I knew that thou art obstinate,
And thy neck is an iron sinew,
And thy brow brass:
5. Therefore I have declared it to thee from of old;
Before it came to pass I shewed it thee:
Lest thou shouldest say, "Mine idol hath done them,
And my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them."
6. [1] Thou hast heard it; behold all this;
And ye, will ye not declare it?
I have shewed thee new things from this time,
Even hidden things, which thou hast not known.
7. They are created now, and not from of old;
And before this day thou heardest them not;
Lest thou shouldest say, "Behold, I knew them."

[1] Gr. *ye have heard all things, yet ye have not discerned.*

3–6a. The argument from prophecy, which has already been met with frequently. If older prophecies have been fulfilled, the "new thing" will also be fulfilled (cf. 42:9). The announcement of events in advance made it impossible to say that they had been caused by idols, but the idolatry implied by vs. 5b seems hardly consistent with our prophet's general view of Israel's past (cf. 43:12). The meaning of *behold all this* (vs. 6) is rather obscure; the text may be faulty. **And ye**, etc.: perhaps, *and thou, wilt not thou bear witness to it?* Israel is Jehovah's witness (43:12).

6b, 7. **I have showed**, *I announce.* The **new** and **hidden things**, which **are created now** (vs. 7), in contrast to the former things, (vs. 3) are the rise of Cyrus — with all that it involves — the fall of Babylon (vs. 14), the redemption of Israel, and the proclamation of the story throughout the world (vs. 20).

8. Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not;
Yea, from of old [1] thine ear was not opened:
For I knew that thou didst deal very treacherously,
And wast called a transgressor from the womb.
9. For my name's sake will I [2] defer mine anger,
And [3] for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.
10. Behold, I have refined thee, but not as silver;
I have [4] chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.
11. For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it,
For [5] how should *my name* be profaned?
And my glory will I not give to another.

12. Hearken unto me, O Jacob,
And Israel my called:
I am he; I am the first, Rev. 1: 17
I also am the last.

[1] Gr. I have *not opened thine ears.* [2] Gr. *show thee.* [3] Gr. *my glorious* acts *I will bring upon thee.* [4] m. *tried.* [5] Gr. *my name is profaned.*

8–11. Only the first half of vs. 8 and the first and third clauses of vs. 11 seem to be original. The idea of Israel's treachery (vs. 8b) and of her possible extermination (vs. 9) is very unlike Deutero-Isaiah.

10. Read: *Surely I have refined thee, but without gain of silver; I have tried thee in the furnace in vain* (Cheyne).

11. *How is my name profaned* — apparently the sigh of a later reader. **My glory**, the glory of accomplishing the "new" and "hidden things" alluded to in vs. 6.

Cyrus fulfils Jehovah's Purpose upon Babylon (vss. 12–16)

The general mention of the "new" things easily leads to the specific mention of Cyrus, by whom those things are to be accomplished.

12 f. Again the old emphasis on the eternity and the creative power of Jehovah. It is no less than the eternal One, the Creator of the universe, who has called Cyrus.

13. Yea, mine hand hath laid the foundation of the earth,
And my right hand hath spread out the heavens:
When I call unto them,
They stand up together.
14. Assemble yourselves, all ye, and hear;
Which among [1] them hath declared these things?
[2] The LORD hath loved him: he shall perform his pleasure on Babylon,
And his arm *shall be on* the Chaldeans.
15. I, even I, have spoken; yea, I have called him:
I have brought him, and [3] he shall make his way prosperous.
16. Come ye near unto me, hear ye this;
From the beginning I have not spoken in secret;
From the time that it was, there am I:
And now the Lord GOD
Hath sent me, and his spirit.

[1] Many Heb. MSS. read *you*. [2] m. SV *he whom the* LORD (SV *Jehovah*) *shall*, etc.; Gr. *out of love to thee I have fulfilled thy desire on Babylon, to destroy the seed of the Chaldeans*. [3] Gr. Syr. *have made*.

14. **All ye** Israelites. **Among them**, *i.e.* the heathen gods. **These things**, the rise and achievements of Cyrus. The general sense of vs. 14b is clear; but the detail is uncertain, because the text is doubtful. Either: *He whom I love, is accomplishing my pleasure on Babylon and on the seed of the Chaldaeans* (Duhm); or: *Who has brought him* (cf. vs. 15) *to accomplish his pleasure on Babylon and to reveal his arm* (=might) *upon the Chaldaeans?* (Cheyne).

15. It is Jehovah who has called, brought, and prospered him. For **he shall make**, read *I have made*.

16. The appeal to **come** and **hear** seems superfluous after vss. 12, 14. **From the beginning**, *i.e.* of the career of Cyrus, Jehovah, through his prophet, has offered a clear interpretation of it (cf. 45:19). For **there am I**, read, perhaps, *I have announced* (*i.e.* new things, vs. 6); so Marti. **His spirit**, object not subject (as AV); the writer is endowed with the (prophetic) spirit (cf. 61:1). This last clause, however, is probably an insertion; nowhere else does Deutero-Isaiah refer to himself.

17. Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
I am the LORD thy God,
Which teacheth thee to profit,
Which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.
18. Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments!
Then had thy peace been as a river,
And thy righteousness as the waves of the sea:
19. Thy seed also had been as the sand,
And the offspring of thy bowels like the [1] grains
thereof:
[2] His name should not be cut off
Nor destroyed from before me.

20. Go ye forth of Babylon,
Flee ye from the Chaldeans;

[1] AV *gravel*; Gr. *dust of the earth.* [2] Gr. *thy.*

The Blessings of Obedience (vss. 17–19)

These verses are a sorrowful retrospect of Israel's disobedient career. Obedience would have meant prosperity, population, a great national future; as it is, extermination seems a more probable prospect for Israel.

Several recent scholars believe these verses to be a later interpolation. They interrupt the fine connection between the activity of Cyrus (vss. 12–16) and the departure of Israel from Babylon (vss. 20 f.). Their gloomy mood is altogether alien to the context (vs. 20); their conception of religion as *commandments* (vs. 18) is unlike Deutero-Isaiah's.

17 f. **To profit**, *i.e.* for thy profit. **Peace**, welfare; **righteousness**, salvation in the most comprehensive sense. They would have flowed on copiously, steadily, unimpeded, like *the waves of the sea.*

19. Clearly Israel is, for the moment, in danger of extermination.

Forth from Babylon! (vss. 20, 21)

20. Cyrus is about to fulfil Jehovah's purpose on Babylon (vs. 14), and Israel is summoned to leave with ringing shouts of joy. The story of her redemption she must then tell the whole world.

With a voice of singing declare ye,
Tell this,
Utter it
Even to the end of the earth:
Say ye, "The LORD hath redeemed
His servant Jacob."
21. And they thirsted not
When he led them through the deserts:
He caused the waters to flow
Out of the rock for them:
He clave the rock also,
And the waters gushed out.

22. There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked.

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21. The exodus from Babylon will repeat the ancient wonders of the exodus from Egypt (Exod. 17:6).

This ringing summons to leave Babylon (20 f.) appropriately brings the first part of the prophecy to a close. Vs. 22, which is irrelevant here, was added from 57:21 to mark an important division in the prophecy.

PART II. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL AND THE FUTURE GLORY OF ZION (Chaps. 49–55)

THE SERVANT DISCOURAGED BUT AT LAST TRIUMPHANT (49 : 1–13) 49 : 1

The Servant: His Seeming Failure and his Great Destiny (49 : 1–6)

49. Listen, O isles, unto me;
And hearken, ye peoples, from far:

Chaps. 49–55. With Chap. 49 we enter upon a new and apparently somewhat later phase of this great prophecy. The theme is still, as before (40 : 1), the consolation of Israel, but here attention is more severely concentrated upon Israel herself, and upon Zion, her capital city. The way has been prepared for this concentration by the arguments which, in Chaps. 40–48, were advanced with such frequency and power — the omnipotence of Israel's God, the impotence of the heathen gods whose people had thwarted his purpose, the victorious career of Cyrus which must issue in the overthrow of Babylon; and now that the way to Israel's political emancipation has been made plain, the prophet reassures her of the love of her God, and in beautiful language describes the glory to which she and Zion will soon be lifted from out the suffering and sorrow of the present.

49 : 1–13. Israel has a prophetic mission to the world, but the exile has smitten her with a sense of defeat. Her great mission, however, will yet be triumphantly accomplished (49 : 1–6), and vss. 7–13 picture the restoration, when from the ends of the earth her children shall return, and her ruined places will be built again.

49 : 1–6. This is the second of the Servant songs (cf. 42 : 1–4). It is represented as uttered by the servant himself, and it strikes a very definite and personal note. The servant, with his sense of a divine call, equipment, and protection, sees through his temporary defeat to the ultimate glory which his God will enable him to achieve. The servant is Israel, languishing in exile; his destiny is to bless the world, to be "a light to the Gentiles."

1. **Isles**: the message (of salvation) concerns the whole world

Gal. 1 : 15

The LORD hath called me from the womb;
From the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

2. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword,
In the shadow of his hand hath he hid me;
And he hath made me a polished shaft,
In his quiver hath he kept me close:

3. And he said unto me, "Thou art my servant;
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
4. But I said, "I have laboured in vain,
I have spent my strength for nought and vanity.

Yet surely my judgement is with the LORD,
And my recompence with my God."
5. And now [1] saith the LORD
That formed me from the womb to be his servant,

[1] Gr. Syr. *thus saith.*

(vs. 6). Israel was divinely **called** *from its birth*, like Jeremiah (1 : 5). **My name** as the Servant of Jehovah, divinely appointed to do a mighty work for the world.

2. The **mouth** is specially mentioned, because Israel is the *prophet* nation. She is Jehovah's *weapon* in his contest with the false gods; through her victory is won for the true religion throughout the world (vs. 6): therefore he **hid**, preserved, protected her carefully, as a warrior his *sword* or his *arrow*, till the decisive moment.

3. **Will be glorified**, will get me glory.

4. Notice the contrast between what *He* said (vs. 3) and what *I* said (vs. 4) — between high destiny and deep despondency. Yet Israel triumphs over her despondency, through the faith that her God will defend her cause, her *right* (rather than **judgment**).

5 f. Again the high sense of destiny. Not only will Israel's work not be fruitless (vs. 4), it will be glorious. These verses seem to lend strong support to the view that the Servant in the songs is an *individual*, whose duty is first to restore his people

To bring Jacob again to him,
[1] And that Israel be gathered unto him:
(For I am honourable in the eyes of the LORD,
And my God is become my strength:)

6. Yea, he saith, [2] "It is too light a thing that thou
shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes
of Jacob,
And to restore the [3] preserved of Israel:
I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, Acts 13:47
[4] That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end
of the earth."

Israel's Happy Return and Restoration (49:7–13)

7. Thus saith the LORD,
The redeemer of Israel, [5] *and* his Holy One,

[1] AV and Heb. variant, *though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious*, etc.; Gr. *to gather Jacob to him and Israel: I shall be gathered and glorified before the Lord.* [2] Gr. *it is a great thing for thee to be called my servant.* [3] Gr. *dispersed.* [4] m. *that my salvation may be.* [5] Gr. *sanctify him who despises his life.*

Israel, and then to carry the light of salvation to the world. But vs. 6, if we omit the words *that thou shouldest be my servant* (which are very awkward, and probably not original in the Hebrew), implies that the task of restoring Israel is *Jehovah's* task — too light for *him;* and similarly in vs. 5, the bringing back of Jacob and the gathering of Israel can be referred, in point of grammar, as well to Jehovah as to the Servant; and the context, as well as the general tone of the songs, decides in favor of Jehovah. It is *he*, not the Servant, who brings back Jacob. When Israel, **preserved** from destruction (or *scattered*, so Gr.), has been restored by Jehovah, then she, the Servant, will turn to the wider world to be a **light to the Gentiles** (cf. 42:1, 4), *that my salvation may be unto the end of the earth* (so margin). Jehovah's salvation is for all mankind (45:22 f.), not for Israel only; she is the means to the larger end.

49:7–13. The thought of Israel's return, touched on in vs. 5, is here elaborated in glowing language; the larger mission of Israel, with which the previous song closed (vs. 6), is here touched, but briefly, in the opening verse (7).

To him whom man despiseth, to him whom the [1] nation abhorreth,
To a servant of rulers:

Kings shall see and arise;
Princes, and they shall worship;
Because of the LORD that is faithful,
Even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.

8. Thus saith the LORD,
2 Cor. 6:2 In an acceptable time have I answered thee,
And in a day of salvation have I helped thee:
And I will preserve thee, and give thee
For a covenant of the [1] people,

To raise up the land,
To make them inherit the desolate heritages;
9. Saying to them that are bound, "Go forth";
To them that are in darkness, "Shew yourselves."

They shall feed in [2] the ways,
And on all bare heights shall be their pasture.

[1] Gr. *nations.* [2] Gr. *all.*

7. Humiliation is followed by exaltation. Now Israel is *despised of men, abhorred of people, servant of tyrants;* but the great ones of the earth, when they *see* her wonderful restoration, will *rise up* in homage, and *prostrate themselves* (rather than **worship**) in reverence.

8, 9a. **In an acceptable time**, *in a time of favor, i.e.* now. **I have** answered, **have** helped; it is already as good as accomplished (hence pf. tense). **Covenant**, etc.: cf. 42:6. **To raise up**, etc.: read *raising up the* (ruined) *land* (*i.e.* Judah), *allotting the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners*, etc. The prisoners and those **in darkness** are the exiles.

9b–11. These verses describe the homeward way, on which Israel would enjoy abundance and suffer no privation. Read **in** *all* **the ways** (so Gr.); *everywhere* they went they would find pasture and water. In vs. 11, omit *my*.

10. They shall not hunger nor thirst; Rev. 7: 16 f.
Neither shall the [1] heat nor sun smite them.

For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them,
Even by the springs of water shall he guide them.
11. And I will make [2] all my mountains a way,
And my high ways shall be exalted.

12. Lo, these shall come from far;
And, lo, these from the north and from the west;
And these from the land of [3] Sinim.

13. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth;
And break forth into singing, O mountains:
For the LORD hath comforted his people,
And will have compassion upon his afflicted.

THE CONSOLATION OF ZION (49: 14–50: 3)

Wasted Zion will be rebuilt and filled again with People (49: 14–21)

14. But Zion said, "Jehovah hath forsaken me,
And the Lord hath forgotten me."

[1] m. *mirage* (cf. 35: 7). [2] Gr. *every mountain a way and every path a pasture to them.* [3] Gr. *the Persians.*

12. **These shall come** from the various centres of the Jewish dispersion. **Sinim**, once thought to be China, is probably Syene (Assouan) in the south of Egypt, where we now know there was a Jewish colony (cf. Ezek. 29: 10; 30: 6, Seveneh).

13. The vision of the glad return leads the prophet to break into a song of joy (cf. 44: 23).

49: 14–50: 3. The people find it hard to believe the glowing promises of their return and restoration, and the prophet again assures them of Jehovah's tender love and irresistible power.

14 f. The broken-hearted and sceptical people receive the assur-

15. Can a woman forget her sucking child,
That she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Yea, [1] these may forget,
Yet will not I forget thee.
16. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands;
Thy walls are continually before me.
17. Thy [2] children make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste
Shall go forth of thee.
18. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold:
All these gather themselves together,
And come to thee. As I live,
Saith the LORD,
Thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament,
And gird thyself with them, like a bride.
19. For, as for thy waste and thy desolate places
And thy land that hath been destroyed,
Surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants,
And they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

[1] Gr. *though a woman should forget these.* [2] Gr. Vg. Tar. *builders.*

ance that God is love. He can no more forget them than a mother her infant child.

16 f. **Graven**, so as not to forget. The plan of the *walls* of the restored city is continually in his mind; and *speedily* it will be executed by the *builders* (rather than **sons**, vs. 17). The triumph of the builders is vividly contrasted with the departure of the **destroyers**.

18. A fine picture of the exiles flocking back to Zion, adorning her as jewels adorn a bride.

19 f. The sense is correct, but something has clearly been lost after the word *destroyed* (vs. 19). Now Jerusalem is too small for the inhabitants. **The children of thy bereavement** are those

20. The children of thy bereavement
Shall yet say in thine ears,
The place is too strait for me;
Give place to me that I may dwell.
21. Then shalt thou say in thine heart,
Who hath [1] begotten me these,
Seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am [2] solitary,
[3] An exile, and wandering to and fro?
And who hath brought up these?
Behold, I was left alone;
These, where were they?

Three Words of Consolation (49:22–50:3)

22. Thus saith the Lord GOD,
Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the nations,
And set up my ensign to the peoples:
And they shall bring thy sons in their bosom,
And thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

[1] m. *borne.* [2] m. *barren.* [3] Gr. om. this line.

born in exile, and who are now flocking back to Jerusalem, their true mother city.

21. Zion is beautifully represented as astonished at the multitude of her children. She cannot understand **who has borne** (not *begotten*) them, since she herself (in exile) is *bereaved and barren*. The city is the mother of her people, and the children born in Babylon are hers (cf. Ps. 87:4), as Hagar's child was Sarah's (Gen. 16:2). Delete *an exile and wandering to and fro* (not in Gr.), and for **these, where were they**? read *and these—who then are they?*

At a Signal from Jehovah, the Nations bring Israel back to Zion (49:22 f.)

22 f. The signal is the raised *hand* or *banner*. **Bosom**, etc.: of course figurative. The people will be brought back as *tenderly*

23. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers,
And their queens thy nursing mothers:
They shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth,
And lick the dust of thy feet;

And thou shalt know that I am the LORD,
And they that wait for me shall not be ashamed.

24. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the [1] lawful captives be delivered?

25. But thus saith the LORD,
Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible shall be delivered:
For I will [2] contend with him that contendeth with thee,
And I will save thy children.

26. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh;
And they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine:

[1] Heb. *captives of the just;* Syr. Vg. *captives of the terrible* (or *tyrant,* cf. vs. 25).
[2] Gr. *plead thy cause.*

as one carries a little child (Num. 11:12). The ungenerous attitude to the heathen in the first half of vs. 23 is unlike our prophet (cf. 45:23) and more in the spirit of later Judaism (cf. 61:5).

Jehovah is Omnipotent (49:24–26)

Jehovah is Omnipotence as well as Love (vs. 15), and the deliverance which he effects for his people no power on earth can cancel.

24 f. For **the lawful captives**, read *the captives of a tyrant;* for **the terrible**, *a tyrant;* for **for I will contend . . . thee**, read *but I will plead thy cause* (so Gr.). Israel, once saved from Babylon by the mighty hand of Jehovah, can never be torn from him again. The question and answer recall vs. 15.

26. The enemies of Israel will die by each other's hands.

And all flesh shall know
That I the LORD am thy saviour,
And thy redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

50. Thus saith the LORD,
Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement,
Wherewith I have put her away?

Or which of my creditors is it
To whom I have sold you?
Behold, for your iniquities were ye sold,
And for your transgressions was your mother put away.

2. Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?
When I called, was there none to answer?
Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?

Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness:

Jehovah's Love and Power (50:1–3)

The people might well suppose that the covenant relationship between Jehovah and Zion had been dissolved. But not so; he has neither divorced her nor sold her children.

1. **Your mother** is Zion, Jehovah is her husband; but there is no **bill of divorcement** to show (*where?* = nowhere) — clearly he has not permanently *put her away* (cf. Deut. 24:1). Children could be sold for the debt of their parents (2 Kings 4:1), but Jehovah, as he could not be in need, could not possibly have any **creditors** to whom his children (Israel) might be sold. It is their *sin* that has created the temporary separation between them and their God.

2 f. To the prophet's message that Jehovah himself was *coming* and *calling* to them through the new political situation, the people had offered no eager response. Surely they did not doubt the divine power; for in creation (or some think at the Exodus)

Their fish [1] stinketh, because there is no water,
And dieth for thirst.

3. I clothe the heavens with blackness,
And I make sackcloth their covering.

THE SERVANT TRIED BUT TRUSTING (50:4–11)

4. The Lord GOD hath given me
The tongue of [2] them that are taught,
That I should know [3] how to sustain with words
Him that is weary.

He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear
To hear as [2] they that are taught.
5. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear,

[1] Gr. *dry up.* [2] m. *disciples.* [3] m. *how to speak a word in season to him,* etc.; Gr. *when it is necessary to speak a word.*

Jehovah had shown himself master of the forces of nature. Read *their fish dry up* (so Gr.) *for lack of water, and their monsters on the thirsty land.*

50:4–11. This (vss. 4–9) is the third of the Servant songs, and constitutes a link between the second (49:1–6) and the fourth (52:13–53:12), elaborating the idea of the servant's suffering in 49:4, and preparing the way for the large interpretation of that suffering in Chap. 53. Here again, the servant is the nation in its ideal capacity.

4 f. Jehovah has given me *a disciple's tongue.* As in 49:2 (*mouth*) the nation is a *prophet,* teaching others because *taught* of Jehovah — his **disciple**. The clause that follows describes more narrowly the nature of his task. The word rendered **sustain** is obscure; perhaps *to answer,* to *feed,* or *to revive the weary with a word (of consolation).*

He wakeneth: read simply *In the morning he wakens mine ear to listen disciple-like,* and omit the first clause of vs. 5 as a belated explanation of 4b. This is a fine description of the vigilance and responsiveness with which the servant awaits the new revelation

And I was not rebellious,
Neither turned away backward.

6. I gave my back to the smiters,
And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair:
I hid not my face
From shame and spitting.

7. For the Lord GOD will help me;
Therefore have I not been confounded:
Therefore have I set my face like a flint,
And I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Rom. 8: 33 f.
Let us stand up together:
Who is mine adversary?
Let him come near to me.

9. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me;
Who is he that shall condemn me?
Behold, they all shall wax old as a garment;
The moth shall eat them up.

---

which each new day brings. There is nothing startling or mysterious in it; but enjoying unbroken intercourse with his God, the disciple's ears are sharp and sensitive to the teaching which the divine Master sends through the common experiences of every day, and, stern as they sometimes were, he was **not rebellious**.

6. His fidelity brought him suffering and indignities manifold. The **smiters** are the heathen, as in Ps. 129: 3.

7–9. The secret of the Servant's unflinching endurance is the confident assurance that **Jehovah will help** him, **justify** him, *i.e.* vindicate him by delivering him (46: 13; 51: 5) — and that speedily. The **adversary** is the heathen; **all they** who oppose Israel and her God are doomed to annihilation.

10. Who is among you that feareth the LORD,
[1] That obeyeth the voice of his servant?
[2] He that walketh in darkness,
And hath no light,
Let him trust in the name of the LORD,
And stay upon his God.

11. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire,
That [3] gird yourselves about with firebrands:
Walk ye in the flame of your fire,
And among the brands that ye have kindled.
This shall ye have of mine hand:
Ye shall lie down in sorrow.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMISE (51: 1–52: 12)

Deliverance is Near and Sure (51: 1–16)

51. Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness,
Ye that seek the LORD:

[1] Gr. *let him obey.* [2] m. *though he walketh.* [3] Syr. *set brands alight.*

Exhortation (vss. 10, 11)

In these verses, a later writer applies the preceding passage (vss. 4–9) to the situation of his own time, using it as a basis of encouragement to the faithful and of warning to the godless.

For **that obeyeth**, read, with the Greek version, *let him obey.* The faithful who **fear Jehovah** are urged to imitate the Servant's confidence in God (vss. 7, 8), while those who **kindle a fire** *and set arrows aflame* (as we should probably read), *i.e.* those who assail the faithful with cruelty and cunning, are urged to *begone into the flame of your fire.* The divine penalty is that they shall **lie down** *in torment* — the torment of hell-fire, Gehenna (66: 23 f.).

51: 1–52: 12. This is one of the most effective and beautiful sections in the whole prophecy. The consolation, interrupted by the Servant's song (50: 4 ff.), is here resumed, and urged in a series of brilliant and powerful appeals.

51: 1–16. The prophet meets Israel's doubts and fears by re-

Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn,
And to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.

2. Look unto Abraham your father,
And unto Sarah that bare you:
For when he was but one I called him,
And I blessed him, and [1] made him many.

3. For the LORD hath comforted Zion:
He hath comforted all her waste places,
And hath made her wilderness like Eden,
And her desert like the garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness shall be found therein,
Thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

4. Attend unto me, [2] O my people;
And give ear unto me, [3] O my nation;
For a law shall go forth from me,
And [4] I will make my judgement to rest for a light
of the peoples.

[1] Gr. *loved him.* [2] Some Heb. MSS. Syr. *ye peoples.* [3] Some Heb. MSS. Syr. *ye nations;* Gr. *ye kings.* [4] Gr. *and my judgement* shall be *for a light,* etc.

calling what Jehovah had already done in the past (vss. 1–3), and by reminding her that the religion which she represents before the world is destined to be universal (4 f.) and everlasting (6–8).

1–3. **Righteousness,** = practically = vindication, deliverance. For **pit,** read *quarry,* and omit *the hole of.* Israel is asked to consider its slender origin; it began in a *single* family — Abraham and Sarah. But as they ultimately became numerous, so will also the present Israel, unpromising though the outlook may be. The fertility, beauty, and gladness in store for Zion are described in vs. 3.

4 f. Israel's (*law, judgment* =) religion is destined to be the religion of the whole world (cf. 42: 1–4) — another source of inspiration and consolation. **I will make to rest** should go with the next verse, and be translated "I will act in a twinkling." Read *and my judgment* (= religion) *for a light of the peoples. Suddenly will I*

5. My righteousness [1] is near,
My salvation is gone forth,
And mine arms shall judge the peoples;
The isles shall wait for me,
And on mine arm shall they trust.

6. Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
And look upon the earth beneath;
For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke,
And the earth shall wax old like a garment.

And they that dwell therein
Shall die [2] in like manner:
But my salvation shall be for ever,
And my righteousness shall not [3] be abolished.

7. Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness,
The people in whose heart is my law;
Fear ye not the reproach of men,
Neither be ye dismayed at their revilings.

8. For [4] the moth shall eat them up like a garment,
And the worm shall eat them like wool:
But my righteousness shall be for ever,
And my salvation unto all generations.

[1] Gr. *draweth quickly near.* [2] m. perhaps *like gnats.* [3] Gr. Vg. *fail.* [4] Gr. *time.*

bring my righteousness (= deliverance, as in vs. 1) *near.* Omit the last clause of vs. 5.

6. The things that are seen are temporary, but the unseen things (in particular the salvation which religion brings) are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18) — "the greatest and loftiest thought conceived before Christianity" (Duhm). For **in like manner**, read, with margin, *like gnats.* **Righteousness** = salvation (cf. vss. 1, 5).

7 f. This hope of everlasting salvation (vs. 6) should inspire Israel to bear with patience the reproach of frail mortal men.

9. Awake, awake, [1] put on strength,
O arm of the LORD;
Awake, as in the days of old,
The generations of ancient times.

[2] Art thou not it that cut Rahab in pieces,
That pierced the dragon?
10. Art thou not it which dried up the sea,
The waters of the great deep;
That made the depths of the sea a way
For the redeemed to pass over?

11. And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, Isa. 35:10
And come with singing unto Zion;
And everlasting joy shall be upon their heads:
They shall obtain gladness and joy,
And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

12. I, even I, am he that comforteth you:
Who art thou, that thou art afraid
Of man that shall die, and of the son of man
Which shall be made as grass;

[1] Gr. *O Jerusalem, and put on the strength of thine arm.* [2] Gr. om. from *art thou* to *dragon.*

Appeal to Jehovah to show his Ancient Power (vss. 9–11)

9–11. **The days of old** are the days of creation, and the allusion is to the mythical conflict between Jehovah and the *dragon* (or **Rahab**), personification of *the great deep*, the chaotic *sea* — a conflict which was supposed to have preceded creation. The mention of the drying up of the sea leads in vs. 10b to the thought of the passage of the Red Sea; and the mention of the *redeemed* has further led to the insertion of 35:10, which is here irrelevant. The verses appeal to Jehovah to assert his power in history, and to create out of the existing confusion a moral order like the physical order he created at the beginning by the destruction of chaos.

13. And hast forgotten the LORD thy Maker, that stretched
forth the heavens,
And laid the foundations of the earth;
And fearest continually all the day
Because of the fury of the oppressor,
[1] When he maketh ready to destroy?
And where is the fury of the oppressor?
14. [2] The captive exile shall speedily be loosed;
And he shall not die *and go down* into the pit,
Neither shall his bread fail.

15. For I am the LORD thy God,
Which stirreth up the sea, that the waves thereof roar:
The LORD of hosts is his name.
16. And I have put my words in thy mouth,
And have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand,
That I may [3] plant the heavens, and lay the foundations
of the earth,
And say unto Zion, "Thou art my people."

[1] m. *as though he made ready* (or *aimed*). [2] m. *he that is bent down.* For vs. 14, Gr. reads only *in thy deliverance he shall not stand* still *nor tarry.* [3] Syr. *stretch forth.*

Jehovah is Omnipotent: let Israel be Comforted and not be Afraid
(vss. 12–16)

This section almost looks like an answer to the preceding prayer, though possibly of independent origin. The old emphasis upon Jehovah's power as shown in creation (Chap. 40) is again used to put heart into timid and disconsolate Israel.

13. Israel has **forgotten** the infinite *power* of her God. He who **made** her made the heavens. **The oppressor**, Babylon. **Where?** = nowhere.

14. Israel is here compared to a famished prisoner in a dungeon (cf. Jer. 38), but probably we have not the original text, as the Greek version is quite different and shorter.

15 f. The authenticity of these verses is doubted, as they are little more than a compilation of other passages (Jer. 31:35; **Is.**

Jerusalem's Affliction: her Speedy Redemption and Glory
(51:17–52:12)

17. Awake, awake,
Stand up, O Jerusalem,
Which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD
The cup of his fury.
Thou hast drunken the bowl of the cup of staggering,
And drained it.
18. There is none to guide her
Among all the sons whom she hath brought forth;
Neither is there any that taketh her by the hand
Of all the sons that she hath brought up.
19. These two things are befallen thee;
Who shall bemoan thee?
Desolation and destruction, and the famine and the sword;
[1] How shall I comfort thee?

Rev. 14: 10

[1] Gr. Syr. Vg. Tar. *who shall.*

59:21; 49:2). They assert Jehovah's power, also his equipment and protection of Israel, which had for its ultimate object the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. Or Marti may be right in supposing the meaning to be that Jehovah had appointed Israel to her high destiny already at creation (*when* he stretched out the heavens, etc.).

51:17–52:12. Jerusalem, compared to a prostrate, helpless woman, is bidden to arise and put on her festal robes, for the great salvation is very near; already the watchmen see the messengers of it upon the mountains. Therefore away, away from Babylon.

The Humiliation of Jerusalem (51:17–20)

17 f. Jerusalem has drunk to the dregs the cup of the divine indignation, she lies senseless; therefore *bestir thee.* Omit **of the cup.** Vs. 18, which speaks of Jerusalem in the third person, is probably a later insertion.

19. **Two things**, or pairs of things — " Wreck and Ruin, Want

20. Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the top of all the streets,
As an antelope in a net;
They are full of the fury of the LORD,
The rebuke of thy God.
21. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted,
And drunken, but not with wine:
22. Thus saith thy Lord the LORD,
And thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people,
"Behold, I have taken out of thine hand
The cup of staggering,
Even the bowl of the cup of my fury;
Thou shalt no more drink it again:
23. And I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee;[1]
Which have said to thy soul,
'Bow down, that we may go over':
And thou hast laid thy back as the ground,
And as the street, to them that go over."

52. Awake, awake, put on
Thy strength, O Zion;

[1] Gr. adds *and of them that humbled thee.*

and War" (G. H. Box: alliteration and assonance in the Hebrew) — the former befalling the land, the latter the people, in consequence of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. For **how shall I,** read *who can* comfort thee?

20. Omit *at the top of all the streets* (from Lam. 2 : 19). **As an antelope** in its fruitless effort to escape.

The Tables Turned (51 : 21–23)

The cup of the divine indignation, which threw Jerusalem prostrate, is to be handed to Babylon.

23. **To thy soul**, *i.e.*, simply *to thee.* **Thy back**: the allusion is to the cruel Oriental custom of riding over the backs of conquered enemies, as they lie prostrate on the ground.

Put on [1] thy beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city;
For henceforth there shall no more come into thee
The uncircumcised and the unclean.
2. Shake thyself from the dust; arise,
Sit thee down, O Jerusalem:
[2] Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck,
O captive daughter of Zion.

Rev. 21:2, 10
Rev. 21:27

3. For thus saith the LORD, ye were sold for nought; and
4. ye shall be redeemed without money. For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there: and the Assyrian oppressed them [3] without cause. Now therefore, what do I here,
5. saith the LORD, [4] seeing that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them do howl, saith the LORD, and my name continually all the day

[1] Gr. *thy glory.* [2] Heb. variant, *the bands of thy neck are loosed.* [3] Gr. *with violence.* [4] Gr. *because my people has been taken for nought, (ye) marvel and howl.*

Let Jerusalem arise from the Dust and put on her Holiday Attire (52:1 f.)

52:1 f. The prostrate (51:17–23) Jerusalem is to *awake* and *arise*, just as Babylon, her adversary, is bidden to *come down* (47:1). **The uncircumcised and the unclean** are the Babylonians. **Sit thee down**, *i.e.*, on thy throne; but perhaps we should read, as at the end of the verse, *O captive* Jerusalem.

The Three Unjust Oppressions of Israel (52:3–6)

Several recent scholars believe this passage to be a late interpolation. It does not fit well into the context, which deals with the immediate future of Jerusalem.

5. Of the three oppressions, the Egyptian, the Assyrian (vs. 4), the Babylonian, the last is in some aspects the worst. **What do I here**? rather *what have I* (obtained) *here*, *i.e.*, in Babylonia? in what way has the Babylonian captivity advantaged Jehovah? **They that rule over them**, *i.e.*, the Babylonians, **do howl**, appar-

6. is blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name: [1] therefore *they shall know* in that day that I am he that doth speak; [2] behold, it is I.

Rom. 10:15 Eph. 6:15

7. How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
That publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good,
That publisheth salvation;
That saith to Zion,
"Thy God reigneth!"

8. The voice of thy watchmen! they lift up the voice,
Together do they sing;
For they shall see, eye to eye,
When the LORD returneth to Zion.

9. Break forth into joy, sing together,
Ye waste places of Jerusalem:
For the LORD hath comforted his people,
He hath redeemed Jerusalem.

[1] Gr. Vg. om. [2] m. *here I am.*

ently in exultation; but this meaning is very doubtful, and the passage has been emended to read, *Behold those who waited for me are become a byword.*

6. By some future interposition which will corroborate his present promise, Jehovah will give his people a convincing experience of himself, and his *name*, which was despised (vs. 5), will come again to its own.

Jehovah's Return to Zion (52:7–12)

A beautiful picture of Jehovah's return to Zion, first heralded by messengers and then witnessed by watchmen from her walls (vss. 7–9).

7 f. **Thy God reigneth**, *i.e.* has entered upon his sovereignty. **Eye to eye**, practically = *face to face:* Jehovah will be so near that the watchmen and he will be able to look into one another's faces.

10. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm
In the eyes of all the nations:
And all the ends of the earth shall see
The salvation of our God.
11. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence,
Touch no unclean thing; 2 Cor. 6 : 17
Go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean,
Ye that bear the vessels of the LORD.
12. For ye shall not go out in haste,
Neither shall ye go by flight:
For the LORD will go before you;
And the God of Israel will be your rearward.

THE HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION OF THE SERVANT (52 : 13–53 : 12)

The Servant: His Sufferings and His Great Glory (52 : 13–53 : 1)

13. Behold, my servant shall[1] deal wisely, he shall be[2] exalted
And lifted up, and shall be very high.
14. Like as many were astonied[3] at thee,

[1] m. *prosper.* [2] Gr. om. [3] Syr. Tar. *at him.*

10. The whole world will be witness of Israel's deliverance. **Bared his arm** to deal the blow, by throwing back the loose upper garment from the right shoulder.

11. A ringing call to **depart** from Babylon (cf. 48 : 20) and, *purifying themselves* and bearing the sacred vessels, to form a solemn procession to the "holy city" (52 : 1).

12. The previous verse had suggested the exodus from Egypt; but the exodus from Babylon shall not be in every respect like that — **for ye shall not go out in haste** (as Israel then did, Exod. 12 : 11, Deut. 16 : 3), but in leisure and security, for their God will be their defence behind and before.

52 : 13–53 : 12. This great passage, the fourth and last of the Servant songs (42 : 1 ff.; 49 : 1 ff.; 50 : 4 ff.), gathers up the leading ideas of the other three, reveals them in their relation to each other,

(His visage was so marred [1] more than any man,
And his form more than the sons of men,)
15. So shall [2] he [3] sprinkle many nations;
Kings shall shut their mouths at him:
Rom. 15:21 For that which had not been told them shall they see;
And that which they had not heard shall they [4] understand.

[1] m. *from that of man, and his form from that of the sons of men.* [2] Gr. *many nations marvel at him.* [3] m. *startle.* [4] m. *consider.*

and presents them in the form of a complete and coherent picture of the character and fortunes of the Servant of Jehovah. He has already appeared as Prophet, the destiny of whose message is the whole world (Chap. 42), and as one who has toiled hard (Chap. 49) and suffered grievously (Chap. 50) in the exercise of his high calling; here the idea of his sufferings is treated with great elaboration, and the Prophet is merged in the Martyr. But the sufferings are crowned in the end with glory; the Servant receives the homage of the world, and is lifted to a place of the very highest honor. Here again the Servant appears to be Israel (see Introduction, pp. 251 ff.).

52:13–53:1. These three verses are a summary of the whole poem — the awful humiliation of the Servant, and the great glory that should follow.

13. **Deal wisely**: rather, with margin, *prosper* (as the result of his insight); but not impossibly the original word was *Israel*. So important and unexpected is his exaltation that three verbs are used to describe it.

14. After the first clause (read *him* for **thee**), another seems to have fallen out, such as "So will many take delight in him" (Cheyne). His exaltation will be as amazing as was his humiliation (in exile). **More than,** etc.; read with margin *from that of man, i.e.*, out of all human likeness — alluding to the disfigurement caused by leprosy (cf. 53:4).

15. In contrast to the Servant's appalling sufferings is the reverent homage that will be paid to him. **Sprinkle** can hardly be right; perhaps, many nations will *do him homage* (Gr. *marvel*). **Shut their mouths** in awe of him. For **understand** read *perceive*. The meaning is that the change in the Servant's (Israel's) fortunes will be without parallel — a thing such as had *never been heard* before. The sorrows and horrors of exile will be followed by a glory which will command the homage and the astonishment of the world.

53. Who hath believed [1] our report?
And to whom hath the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Jn. 12 : 38
Rom. 10 : 16

The Sorrows, Humiliation, and Death of the Servant (53 : 2–9)

2. For he grew up before him as a tender plant,
And as a root of a dry ground:
He hath no form or comeliness; [2] and when we see him,
There is no beauty that we should desire him.

3. He was despised, and [3] rejected of men;
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with [4] grief;
And as one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.

[1] m. *that which we have heard.* SV *message.* [2] m. *that we should look upon him; nor beauty,* etc. [3] m. *forsaken.* [4] Heb. *sickness.*

53 : 1. This verse goes closely with the last. The transformation is alike unparalleled *and incredible* — for **who** could have **believed what we have heard** (see margin), namely, *the revelation of the arm* (*i.e.*, the power) *of Jehovah*, as shown in the miraculous exaltation of Israel? The whole passage from vs. 1 to 11a appears to be spoken by *the heathen*, whose astonishment at the change in the fortunes (of Israel) has just been alluded to (52 : 15).

2. **Before him** (Jehovah?), perhaps, "before *us*." The soil on which the Servant grew up was **dry ground**; *i.e.*, the circumstances by which he was surrounded were unpromising, disheartening — a possible allusion to the exile. Further, he was in himself unattractive:

Having no form that we should regard him,
And no beauty that we should desire him.

Omit *nor comeliness.*

3. Not only unattractive was he, but repulsive, *a man of pains and familiar with sickness* (not **grief**), smitten, as it were, with loathsome leprosy (vs. 4), and therefore by others *despised, forsaken*, shunned.

4. Surely he hath borne our [1] griefs,
Mat. 8:17 And carried our sorrows:
Yet we did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God and afflicted.

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities:
The chastisement of our peace was upon him;
1 Pet. 2:24 And with his stripes we are healed.

1 Pet. 2:25 6. All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way;
And the LORD hath [2] laid on him
The iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed, yet he humbled himself
And opened not his mouth;

[1] Heb. *sicknesses.* [2] Heb. *made to light.*

4. The fact of the Servant's sufferings led the spectators to the theory that he was "smitten *of God*" for sins of his own—a frequent explanation of suffering in the Old Testament (cf. the friends of Job); but in truth, as they are led to feel afterwards, it was *their* pains and sickness that he bore. What he suffered, they deserved. Throughout these verses **he** and **we** are strongly and strikingly contrasted. Leprosy was in a special sense the *stroke* of God, and the figure of the leper undoubtedly underlies this description.

5. Not only is his suffering vicarious (because of *their* sins), but redemptive (with a view to their salvation, **peace**, welfare). Upon him was *the chastisement which was to procure our welfare;* and the stripes which he suffered brought healing to the guilty, by waking in them a sense of guilt and penitence.

6. **Sheep** without their shepherd God (cf. Ps. 23:1). The Servant's suffering was not an accident, nor was it punishment for his own sin; it was *Jehovah's* doing, and for the sins of *others. It was Jehovah who caused to light upon him the guilt of*, and the punishment due to, *us all.*

7. Though **oppressed** by the Babylonians (if the servant be

As a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb;
Yea, he opened not his mouth.

Acts 8:32 f.
Rev. 5:12

8. [1] By oppression and judgement he was taken away;
[2] And as for his generation, who *among them* considered
That he was cut off out of the land of the living?
[3] For the transgression of my people [4] was he stricken.

9. And [5] they made his grave with the wicked,
And with the rich in his death;

[1] m. *from;* AV *he was taken from prison and from judgment;* Gr. *in* his *humiliation his judgment* (= rights) *was taken away.* [2] Gr. AV *who shall declare his generation?* [3] Gr. *for the transgressions of my people he was led to death.* [4] m. SV *to whom the stroke* was due. [5] Gr. *I will give the wicked for his burial, and the rich for his death.*

Israel), *he was submissive* and gentle as a lamb, like Jeremiah (11:19). Omit the last clause.

8. Almost every word in the first half of this verse is difficult and ambiguous, but out of the obscurity emerges clearly enough the fact that the Servant died by an act of injustice. We may tentatively emend and translate with Marti: *debarred from justice he was taken away* to death, *and as for his fate* (so Cheyne), *who gave it a thought, that* (or *for*) . . . ? **The land of the living**: in exile Israel is as good as dead (cf. Ezek. 37). **My people**: the abrupt use of the first person singular, not yet used in this chapter, is strange. A very simple textual change would give "for *our* rebellions" or "for the rebellion *of the peoples*" — either of which would be appropriate, as it is the Gentiles who are speaking (cf. note on vs. 1).

9. Another difficult verse. Instead of **in his death**, a word is needed parallel to *his grave:* possibly we should translate *his burial-mound* — Sellin ingeniously conjectured *his cross.* Just as the poor and the pious are often practically synonymous in the Old Testament, so might the *wicked* and the *rich* be; but by a simple change the verse may be made to read:

His grave was appointed with the rebellious,
And with the wicked his burial mound.

In any case, the idea is that he was dishonored, in death, with a felon's burial.

1 Pet. 2 : 22
Rev. 14 : 5

[1] Although he had done no violence,
Neither was any deceit in his mouth.

The Servant's Ultimate Glory and Exaltation (53 : 10–12)

10. Yet [2] it pleased the LORD to bruise him ; he hath [3] put him to grief :
[4] When thou shalt make his soul [5] an offering for sin,
He shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days,
And [6] the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
11. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied.

[1] m. Gr. Vg. AV *because.* [2] Gr. *the Lord is pleased to purify him from his stroke.* [3] Heb. *made him sick.* [4] m. *when his soul shall make an offering ;* Gr. *if ye give* an offering *for sin, your soul shall see a long-lived seed.* [5] Heb. *a guilt offering.* [6] Gr. *the Lord is pleased to rescue from the trouble of his soul* (originally no doubt *to rescue his soul from trouble*), *to show him light, and to form* (perhaps originally *fill*) him *with understanding : to justify the just one who serves many well.*

10, 11a. These verses present difficulties of many kinds, but two things are plain : (i) that behind the Servant's fate is the divine will — no accident or caprice, but the pleasure or purpose of Jehovah ; and (ii) that that purpose has decreed the ultimate exaltation of the Servant. Though slain and buried, he is to rise again, to enter upon a long and prosperous career, and triumphantly to prosecute the purpose of Jehovah. This language is much more appropriate to the nation (cf. 52 : 15) than to an individual. Unfortunately the Greek text of this passage deviates very seriously from the Hebrew, and the original text is beyond the possibility of recovery. Marti, assuming that a certain group of letters has been accidentally duplicated, and adopting some hints from the Greek, translates :

But Jehovah had pleasure in his servant,
And rescued his soul from misery,
He lets him see light to the full,
And in his posterity helps him to his vindication.

With our present text, the third clause of vs. 10 (which should perhaps be translated " when *he* makes his soul, *i.e.*, himself, a guilt-offering ") is explained by the fuller statements of vss.

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant [1] justify many:
And he shall bear their iniquities.
12. Therefore [2] will I divide him a portion with the great,
And he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

Because he poured out his soul unto death,
And was numbered with the transgressors:
Yet he bare the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.

Lk. 22 : 37
1 Pet. 2 : 24
Rom. 4 : 25
Heb. 9 : 28

[1] m. *make many righteous.* [2] Gr. *he will inherit.*

5 f.; but the *when* (or *if*) is hard to reconcile with the fact that the offering has already been made. Again, 11a, in its present form, would mean that, as a result of his sorrow, the Servant would see with satisfaction the cause of Jehovah prospering in his hand; and the next clause would read, *by* his *knowledge* of God and his saving purpose *shall a righteous one, my servant, make the many righteous.* But the Hebrew for this is stiff and unnatural, and the original text was probably different. From the general tenor of the prophecy, it is fairly probable that the reference here is to *Jehovah's* justification or vindication of *his Servant* rather than to the Servant's justification of others. With these words — *He* (Jehovah) *will justify him* (the Servant) — the speech of the heathen, begun in vs. 1, comes to an end.

11b, 12. **My righteous servant**: rather, "there stands **my servant** (Jehovah is now speaking, as in 52 : 13) **righteous**," *i.e.* justified, vindicated, **before the many**: the *many* are the heathen (52 : 15). Israel, triumphantly emerging from the exile, in which she had borne the penalty of the sins of others, is vindicated, and takes her place among the *great* and the *strong*, *i.e.* the notable ones of the earth. For **I will divide**, read, with the Greek version, *he will inherit.* This exaltation is at once the result and the *reward* of his sufferings — **because he poured out his soul** (*i.e.* his life-blood): omit *unto death.* **Yet**, or *though, whereas.*

The interpretation of suffering presented by this passage is the profoundest in the Old Testament. The common theory explained suffering as the result of sin on the part of the sufferer, though cases are not unknown where the innocent perished for the guilty (2 Sam. 21). But the greatness of this interpretation is that the suffering of the innocent is regarded as inspired with a

The Future Glory of Jerusalem (Chap. 54)

The New Jerusalem will be Large and Populous, and Blessed with the Steadfast Favor of God (54 : 1–10).

Gal. 4 : 27 **54.** Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear;
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child:
For more are the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

2. Enlarge the place of thy tent,
And [1] let them stretch forth the curtains [2] of thine habitations; spare not:

[1] Gr. *stretch*, etc. [2] Gr. om.

redemptive purpose — the redemption of the guilty. It is imposed by God with this purpose, and accepted by the Servant in this spirit. It is chastisement which ultimately procures the peace of the guilty (53 : 5), and it is borne by the sufferer obediently and unmurmuringly. The result is that the guilty are conscience-smitten, and finally won, accepting Jehovah's salvation and honoring his Servant. Thus the reward of the Servant is twofold: through him the guilty are won to God, and he himself is lifted to a place of the very highest honor. The suffering has not been in vain (49 : 4), it issues in triumph — in the conversion, if not of all, yet of some; and the sufferer comes down from his cross to be crowned with glory and honor. (See Introduction, pp. 252 ff.)

Chap. 54. This glowing picture of the future of Jerusalem appropriately follows the vision of the exaltation of the Servant in 53 : 10–12, especially if the Servant be Israel: in any case it continues the strains of consolation and encouragement, begun in 49 : 14, with which the prophet wishes to close.

Size and Population of the New Jerusalem (vss. 1–6)

1. **Barren**: Zion is addressed. **Desolate** and **married** — describe Zion *during* and *before* the exile. Zion is *married* to Jehovah; during the exile she has been temporarily put away, but not divorced (50 : 1). For the thought of the numerous children that Zion shall have on her restoration, cf. 49 : 19–21.

Lengthen thy cords,
And strengthen thy stakes.

3. For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and
on the left;
And thy seed shall possess the nations,
And make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed:
Neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be
put to shame:
For thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth,
And the reproach of thy widowhood shalt thou re-
member no more.

5. For thy Maker is thine husband;
The LORD of hosts is his name:
And the Holy One of Israel is thy redeemer;
The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6. For the LORD hath called thee
[1]As a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,

[1] Gr. *not as*, etc.

2 f. Omit *of thine habitations* (so Gr.). **Spare not**, *i.e.* unstintingly. The **curtains** are the tent hangings. Jerusalem is compared to a large *tent*, which will need long ropes and strong tent pegs. **Spread abroad**, said of population. **The nations**: the old Davidic empire is to be restored (55: 3–5). **Desolate cities** of Palestine.

4 f. **The shame of thy youth**, Israel's subjection to Egypt, and perhaps to Assyria: **the reproach of thy widowhood**, her subjection to Babylon (in exile). **Shall he be called**, rather *is* he called: Israel's God is the great God of the universe.

6. **Called thee** back as **a wife** who was temporarily out of favor (Est. 2: 14) — *outcast and downcast* (there is a word play in the

[1] Even a wife of youth, [2] when she is cast off,
Saith thy God.

7. For a small moment have I forsaken thee;
But with great mercies will I gather thee.
8. In [3] overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee [4] for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee,
Saith the LORD thy redeemer.

9. For this is as the [5] waters of Noah unto me:
For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10. For the mountains shall depart,
And the hills be removed;
But my kindness shall not depart from thee,
Neither shall my covenant of peace be removed,
Saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

[1] Gr. *nor as a wife hated from* her *youth.* [2] AV *when thou wast refused.* [3] m. Gr. *a little wrath.* [4] Gr. om. [5] Syr. Tar. Vg. some Gr. and Heb. MSS. *days.*

Hebrew, Cheyne). **When she is cast off**: "and one who has been wedded in youth, *can she be rejected?*" (Cheyne). See vs. 1.

The Immovable Love of God (vss. 7–10)

7 f. **A small moment** — the exile, which seemed but a moment in comparison with the everlasting glory that should follow (2 Cor. 4:17). In vs. 8 omit *overflowing* and *for a moment.*

9 f. **This** crisis **is as the** *days* (rather than **waters**) **of Noah** (Gen. 8:20–22). In vs. 10, for **for . . . but**, read *though . . . yet.* The divine love is more firm and constant than the order of nature.

The New Jerusalem will be Fair and Impregnable (54 : 11–17)

11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
Behold, I will set thy stones in [1] fair colours,
And lay thy foundations with sapphires.
12. And I will make thy [2] pinnacles of [3] rubies, Rev. 21: 18 f.
And thy gates of carbuncles,
And all thy border of pleasant stones.
13. And all thy children shall be [4] taught of the Lord, Jn. 6: 45
And great shall be the peace of thy children.
14. In righteousness shalt thou be established:
Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear;
And from terror, for it shall not come near thee.
15. Behold, they may [5] gather together, but not by me:
Whosoever shall [5] gather together against thee, shall fall because of thee.
16. Behold, I have created the smith
That bloweth the fire of coals,
And bringeth forth a weapon for [6] his work:

[1] m. *antimony;* Gr. *carbuncle.* [2] m. AV *windows.* [3] Gr. Vg. *jasper.* [4] m. *disciples.* [5] m. *stir up strife.* [6] m. *its.*

The Beauty of Jerusalem (vss. 11–14a)

11 f. Read perhaps, *I will set thy bases in malachite.* **Border**, the surrounding wall. The whole will glitter with precious stones. A glorious imagination, when we think of the burned city and the ruined walls (2 Kings 25 : 9 f).

13, 14a. **Taught** — acquainted with their God (Jer. 31 : 34) and obedient *disciples* of his. **Peace**, welfare.

The Strength and Security of Jerusalem (vss. 14b–17)

15. A very obscure verse, probably late. It may be provisionally rendered, "If any one should stir up strife, it is not of me; whoso stirs up strife with thee, on thy account shall fall."

16 f. This verse explains why Jerusalem may feel so secure,

And I have created the waster to destroy.

17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;
And every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgement thou shalt condemn.
This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their righteousness which is of me, saith the LORD.

INVITATION TO EMBRACE THE IMPENDING SALVATION (Chap. 55)

The Blessings in Store for Israel (55:1–5)

Rev. 21:6; 22:17

55. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,
And he that hath no money; come ye,
Buy, and eat; yea, [1] come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.

[1] Gr. om. *come, buy.*

because Jehovah is the arbiter of war, the Lord alike of those who make and of those who use weapons — of the **smith** and the **waster** or destroyer, *i.e.* the devastating warrior. This being so, no assault upon Zion, whether with *weapon* or word, can be successful. **Condemn**, *show to be in the wrong.* **Righteousness** = vindication. The last half of vs. 17 is probably appended.

Chap. 55. In this closing chapter, the prophet makes his supreme appeal, holding before the people the emptiness of life in Babylon, the brilliant future in store for them, and the speediness and certainty with which God will fulfil his redemptive purpose.

1 f. **Thirsty** describes those longing and languishing in exile; and the invitation is modelled on the call of the water sellers. The *wine, milk,* and *bread* are symbolic of all that is involved in the restoration of Israel — not only material welfare, but a place of unique honor and power in the world (vs. 5). All this is offered to Israel for nothing; her God gives it to her as a free gift. On the other hand, her own worldly efforts and ambitions in Babylon have brought nothing but dissatisfaction. Vs. 1 should probably read:

Ho! all that are thirsty, come to the waters!
And ye that have no strength, eat!
Yea come, buy grain without money,
And wine and milk without price.

2. Wherefore do ye [1] spend money for that which is not
bread?
And your [2] labour for that which satisfieth not?
Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is
good,
And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3. Incline your ear, and come unto me;
Hear, and your soul shall live:
And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
Even the sure mercies of David.
4. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples,
A [3] leader and commander to the peoples.

5. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not,
And a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee,
Because of the LORD thy God,
And for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified
thee.

The Wonderful Salvation is near; forth then from Babylon!
(55:6–13)

6. Seek ye the LORD while he may be found,
Call ye upon him while he is near:

[1] Heb. *weigh.* [2] m. *earnings.* [3] m. *prince.*

Vs. 2 means, "if ye hearken to me, ye shall eat, etc."; prosperity depends upon obedience to the call.

3–5. The new **covenant** made with the people is defined as **the sure mercies of David**, *i.e.* the gracious promises once given to David (2 Sam. 7:8–16) and *sure*, *i.e.* reliable, because actually realized in him. The meaning of this phrase is definitely fixed by the two following verses, the two *beholds* being practically = *as . . . so.* As David, by his subjugation of foreign nations, was thus a divinely constituted **witness** to the world of Jehovah's power and glory (vs. 4), so would Israel, by a similar, though spiritual, victory (cf. 2:2–4), similarly become Jehovah's witness (43:12; 44:8).

7. Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts:
And let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him;
And to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.
8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
Neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways,
And my thoughts than your thoughts.

10. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven,
And returneth not thither, but watereth the earth,
And maketh it bring forth and bud,
And giveth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;

Thou shalt call (vs. 5), as a master calls his servant. Israel is the spiritual lord of the world, because light of the world (42:6; 49:6).

55:6–13. The prophet now returns, in the end, to the thoughts upon which he had launched his prophecy — the nearness of Israel's redemption and her wonderful march to the home-land (Chap. 40).

6. **Seek ye Jehovah**: not a general exhortation — For *now* is the day of salvation (49:8). **He is near** now, in the imminent deliverance of Israel from Babylon through Cyrus.

7. Vs. 7 is probably a later insertion, as, besides addressing the individual (which our prophet does not do), it deflects the thought somewhat to the here rather irrelevant idea of repentance, and forces upon vs. 8 the weak idea that God's thoughts are not *wicked*.

8 f. Israel's thoughts in Babylon were centred on the visible and material (vs. 2); Jehovah's thoughts for them were thoughts of salvation, large and *high*, of far reach and compass — thoughts to which the sorrows of exile rightly appeared as the pathway to honor and glory (Chap. 53).

10 f. For **but watereth**, read *without watering*. The divine word is regarded as a real power, which simply cannot fail of accomplishment (40:8); and that word has decreed, through Jehovah's prophets, the return of the people to their own land.

11. So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:
It shall not return unto me [1] void,
But it shall accomplish that which I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

12. For ye shall go out with joy,
And be led forth with peace:
The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree:
And it shall be to the LORD for a name,
For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

[1] Gr. om.

12 f. **For ye shall go out** of Babylon (cf. 52 : 12); this is the proof that Jehovah's word is not void (vs. 11). All nature will rejoice in sympathy with Israel's second exodus. This miraculous transformation of the desert into a region abounding in beautiful trees will be **an everlasting sign**, a permanent memorial of the power and the glory of Israel's God.

With this vision of the desert transformed and the redeemed people marching across it to the dear home-land, the great prophecy closes.

TRITO-ISAIAH

(CHAPS. 56–66)

TRITO-ISAIAH (Chaps. 56–66)

I. The Background of the Prophecy

A period of about eighty or ninety years seems to separate Deutero-Isaiah (Chaps. 40–55) from the group of prophecies contained in Chaps. 56–66, now frequently called for convenience' sake Trito-Isaiah (third Isaiah). The scenery of this group is Palestinian. The exile is over. More than three quarters of a century had elapsed — the date of the group is probably about 450 B.C. — since the Jews, or some of them, had returned from Babylon to the home-land, and endeavored to reconstitute their national life — at least along ecclesiastical lines, for of political power they had none ; they were but a tiny dependency of the great Persian empire.

Encouraged by the brilliant promises of the great exilic prophet (Chaps. 40–55), they had come back with the highest hopes in their heart. But these hopes were doomed to speedy and cruel disappointment. Nature and man were alike unkind. There were bad seasons, and the neighboring peoples seem for long to have given the little community much trouble by border forays and in other ways. Even as late as the time when the chapters we are considering were written, large tracts of Judah are desolate (61 : 4), the enemies upon their borders are raiding their fields and their vineyards (62 : 8), and the ruined walls of Jerusalem are still unbuilt (60 : 10). Under the stimulus of the preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, the second temple, to replace the one destroyed nearly seventy years before by Nebuchadrezzar, was begun in 520 and completed in four years. This temple is several times referred to in the course of the prophecy (60 : 7 ; 62 : 9 ; 65 : 11 ;

66 : 6), but it is very plain that throughout the period religion was at a low ebb. Externals, such as fasting (58 : 3), received careful attention: it is characteristic of the period that even our prophet himself solemnly insists upon the importance of Sabbath observance (56 : 2, 6; 58 : 13 f.); but as in the days of Isaiah (29 : 13), the hearts of the worshippers were far enough from their God. The service of God was completely dissociated from the service of man. The men who so scrupulously fasted were guilty of bad temper and violence towards their employees (58 : 3 f.). Bloodshed, falsehood, and injustice reigned (59 : 3 f.). Little could be expected of the rank and file when the leaders themselves were worthless and greedy, self-indulgent, and careless of the welfare of the people for whom they were responsible (56 : 9–12).

On its religious side, the situation was still further complicated by the presence of men in the community whose practices were nothing short of pagan. These would be in part descendants of the people who had not been carried into exile, but who, remaining in the land, had perpetuated many an idolatrous local custom; in part, however, they may have been Samaritans, and possibly other neighbors, with lower religious ideals, who in various ways had intruded into the Jewish community. Their idolatrous practices are alluded to in some curious and interesting passages. Sometimes these consisted in the deliberate worship of other gods, for example, Milcom[1] (57 : 9), Fortune, Destiny (65 : 11); sometimes in secret and mysterious rites, conducted in groves (65 : 4) or gardens (65 : 3; 66 : 17), and involving superstitious ideas and practices which were abhorrent to the true Jew, such as the eating of swine's flesh (65 : 4; 66 : 17). This idolatrous party is sharply contrasted with the strict and faithful few — notably in 65 : 13 ff., where four times within two verses the latter are honored with the title "my servants."[2]

[1] See the commentary. [2] Plural. In this prophecy we hear no more of the Servant, who figured so prominently in Chaps. 40-55.

II. The Prophet's Message

It is, as we have seen, to a very guilty people that the prophet speaks. It is their iniquities that have separated them from their God, and their sins that have hidden his face (59 : 2) ; and the demand of Trito-Isaiah,[1] as of most of the prophets, is for a religion that expresses itself in just and kindly relations between man and man. Fasting was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the important exercises of religion, but the fast that is approved by God and this prophet of his is a fast, not from meat, but from oppression. Or, to be more accurate, the true service of God and the real exercises of religion are not negative at all, but positive ; they consist in the effort, as he describes it in ever memorable words, "to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, to deal thy bread to the hungry, to bring the vagrants home, to cover the naked, to satisfy the afflicted soul" (58 : 6, 7, 10). In other words, the only religious service worth much is social service ; and only a community which is prepared to serve God in this way may hope to be happy and prosperous and divinely guided (58 : 10–12). There could be no possible fellowship between the righteous God and the rapacious leaders ; it was only with men of broken and humble spirit that the holy God could dwell (57 : 15 ; 66 : 2). This prophet lays considerable emphasis upon material prosperity as an element in the reward of Jehovah's faithful servants (65 : 13 ff.), but better still it was to know that Jehovah took up his abode with them (57 : 15) and turned his gracious face upon them (66 : 2).

The hope of Trito-Isaiah is astonishingly bold. There was indeed little in the Jerusalem with which he was familiar to kindle hope or to touch the imagination. With her demolished walls and her meagre population, some wicked,

[1] This word is used to cover Chaps. 56–66, though it is not impossible that the group is composed of fragments from more hands than one.

others crushed and disconsolate, she must have lain as a very heavy burden upon his heart. But he looked beyond the shame and sorrow of the present to new heavens and a new earth (65 : 17) ; beyond the guilty city he saw the new Jerusalem, which was to be "a rejoicing, and her people a joy" (65 : 18). Upon the description of this Jerusalem to be, the prophet lavishes all the resources of his imagination. Her people, who are to be all righteous (60 : 21), shall know no fruitless toil or tears, no early death or sudden sorrow (65 : 19–25). Her prosperity shall flow like a river, and her children, gathered from the ends of the earth, shall be comforted for evermore (66 : 12–14). Through her gates, which are to be open day and night, will stream the wealth of distant peoples, and over her will rest continually the wondrous light of the glory of her God, so that she shall need the light of sun and moon no more (Chap. 60).

Almost the only feature that mars the beauty of this vision is the place which the prophet assigns in it to the foreigner. Less generous than his great predecessor Deutero-Isaiah, he gives to the heathen, in comparison with the Jew, a place of not only subordinate, but almost menial, service. The Jews, as the mediators of the true religion, are regarded with a perhaps not unnatural pride as "the priests of Jehovah, the ministers of our God" (61 : 6). But in contrast with this high honor accorded to the Jew is the destiny assigned to the foreigner: "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers" (61 : 5); and it is foreigners who are to rebuild the ruined walls of Jerusalem (60 : 10). Not only their service but their wealth is to be made tributary to the Jews, and to go to the embellishment of Jerusalem. Through the gates men are to bring to her the wealth of the nations (60 : 11), and "the wealth of the nations ye shall eat" (61 : 6). The Jews are to be the lords of the world, the other nations are their cringing vassals (60 : 12).

In these aspirations the prophecy gives expression to one of the least lovely traits of Judaism. But it is only fair to remember that the same prophecy generously assigns a place within the sacred community to the eunuch and the foreigner, if they keep the Sabbath and hold fast the covenant (Chap. 56).

III. The Style of Trito-Isaiah

The literary style of Chaps. 56–66 is imitative rather than original. Echoes, in particular, of Chaps. 40–55, are frequent — so frequent that the two groups have till a few years ago been universally ascribed to the same hand. The writer's powers are seen at their best in his description of the Jerusalem to be, parts of which are almost as fine as anything in the Old Testament. No one can miss the beauty and cadence of the following passage, for example, even in the ordinary English prose translation:

Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
  Desolation nor destruction within thy borders;
But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,
  And thy gates Praise.
The sun shall be no more thy light by day,
  Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee;
But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light,
  And thy God thy glory.
Thy sun shall no more go down,
  Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself;
For the Lord shall be thine everlasting light,
  And the days of thy mourning shall be ended (60 : 18–20).

ANALYSIS OF CHAPTERS 56–66

1. A word of cheer to those who are in danger of being excluded from the church (56 : 1–8).
2. The demoralization of leaders and people (56 : 9–57 : 13).
   (1) The sensuous leaders (56 : 9–57 : 2).
   (2) The idolatrous people (57 : 3–13).
3. Blessings in store for the faithful (57 : 14–21).
4. The true and the false worship (chap. 58).
   (1) Fasting (58 : 1–12).
   (2) The sabbath (58 : 13 f).
5. The sinful people and the divine deliverance (chap. 59).
   (1) The sins (59 : 1–8).
   (2) The confession (59 : 9–15).
   (3) The deliverance (59 : 16–21).
6. The glory of the new Jerusalem (chap. 60).
7. The proclamation of Zion's redemption (chaps. 61 and 62).
8. The destruction of the foes of Zion (63 : 1–6).
9. Passionate prayer for the divine favor (63 : 7–64 : 12).
   (1) Thanksgiving for ancient mercies (63 : 7–14).
   (2) Passionate entreaty for the divine forgiveness and pity (63 : 15–64 : 12).
10. The blessedness of the faithful and the doom of the apostates (chaps. 65 and 66).
   (1) The fate of the apostates (65 : 1–7).
   (2) The destiny of the faithful in the impending judgment (65 : 8–12).
   (3) The great contrast (65 : 13–16).
   (4) The glorious future (65 : 17–25).
   (5) Doom pronounced upon those who purpose to build a rival temple (66 : 1–4).
   (6) The faithful cheered by the promise of Zion's prosperity (66 : 5–14).
   (7) The judgment (66 : 15–18 a).
   (8) Jehovah's glory announced throughout the world : the complete restoration and perpetuity of Israel (66 : 18 b–22).
   (9) The fearful fate of the apostates (66 : 23 f).

TRITO-ISAIAH (Chaps. 56–66)

A Word of Cheer to those who are in Danger of being excluded from the Church (56 : 1–8) 56 : 1

56. Thus saith the Lord,
"Keep ye judgement, and do righteousness:
For my salvation is near to come,
And my righteousness to be revealed."

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56 : 1–8. The exile is over. For more than half a century, Israel has been in her own land; and questions are arising about the constitution of the church. Shall it include only those who are Jews by birth, or others also? The presence of aliens must, in many cases, have been a menace to the purity of Hebrew religion, and one can easily understand the rigor of the exclusive measures of Ezra (Chaps. 9 f.), which belong no doubt to this same period; but our prophet, like the writer of the book of Ruth, takes here a more generous view of the foreigner, and is willing to give him a place in the religious community, if he consents to observe the Jewish law — the sabbath being significantly singled out for special emphasis. In the sequel, it was the policy of the sterner Ezra, not of the larger-hearted prophet, that prevailed. With regard to eunuchs also, the hope of the prophet was more generous than the demands of the law (Deut. 23 : 1).

Exhortation to keep the Law (vss. 1 f.)

1 f. The glorious future described as **my salvation** is to be won by keeping **judgment**, practically = the commandments of the law. During the exile, when sacrifice was impossible, circumcision, and the hallowing of **the sabbath**, came to be important marks of Judaism, and they remained so (cf. Neh. 13 : 17). Its prominence here (cf. vs. 6) is significant. In vs. 1 **righteousness** is obviously used in two senses; in the second half of the verse, it is = *salvation* (as in Deutero-Isaiah); in the first it is = legal righteousness, and defined more narrowly in the last half of vs. 2.

2. Blessed is the man that doeth this,
And the son of man that holdeth fast by it;
That keepeth the sabbath from profaning it,
And keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

3. Neither let the [1] stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying,
"The LORD will surely separate me from his people":
Neither let the enunch say,
"Behold, I am a dry tree."

4. For thus saith the LORD
"Of the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths,
And choose the things that please me,
And hold fast by my covenant:

5. Unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a [2] memorial and a name
Better than of sons and of daughters;

[1] SV *foreigner.* [2] m. Gr. *place;* Heb. *hand.*

Consolation to Proselytes and Eunuchs (vss. 3–8)

3. **Will surely separate**: foreigners who acknowledged Jehovah appear to have suspected that exclusive measures against them were in contemplation, as indeed they were (cf. Ezra 10:11). The **eunuchs** would probably be Hebrews serving at the Persian court (cf. 39:7). Their grievance was twofold, excluded as they were by law (Deut. 23:1) from a present place in the congregation, and debarred through their childlessness — being **a dry tree** — from any place in the future life and worship of Israel.

4 f. Proselytes and eunuchs are not to be disheartened, **for** . . . . In the words of consolation, the eunuch comes first (4 f.), then the proselyte (6 f.). **Hold fast**, etc.: *i.e.* fulfil the obligations of the Jewish law. The consolation of the eunuch, like his grievance, will be twofold: he will be given a place in the congregation, and his name will be perpetuated (like the childless Absalom's, 2 Sam. 18:18) by the erection of a **memorial** or monument, within the

I will give [1] them an everlasting name,
That shall not be cut off.

6. Also the [2] strangers that join themselves to the LORD,
To minister unto him, and to love the name of the LORD,
To be his servants,
Every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast by my covenant,

7. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain,
And make them joyful in my House of Prayer;
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar:
For mine House shall be called an House of Prayer for all peoples."

Mat. 21:13
Mk. 11:17
Lk. 19:46

8. The Lord GOD which gathereth
The outcasts of Israel saith,
"Yet will I gather *others* to him,
Beside his own that are gathered."

[1] Heb. *him;* Gr. *them.* [2] SV *foreigners.*

temple precincts (*the walls of my house*) — a memorial which will be as permanent as the temple itself (cf. 55:13).

6 f. Similarly, foreigners who devoutly acknowledged Jehovah would also be admitted to the privileges of worship. **My holy mountain**, the *temple* mountain. The temple, the house of sacrifice, is now twice significantly called **house of prayer**. During the exile prayer and the spiritual aspect of religion generally would doubtless attain a prominence they had never enjoyed before. In the temple, the **sacrifices** of these devout foreigners **shall be accepted**, and their prayers heard (1 Kings 8:43). **For all peoples**, not without qualification, but on condition of obedience to the Jewish law (vs. 6). This clause is strikingly quoted by our Lord (Mark 11:17).

8. A very noble verse which sums up the thought of the section. Some of Israel's exiles are already **gathered** back to their own land;

The Degradation of Leaders and People (56: 9–57: 13)

The Sensuous Leaders (56 : 9–57 : 2)

9. All ye beasts of the field, come to devour,
   Yea, all ye beasts in the forest.
10. [1] His watchmen are blind,
   They are all without knowledge;
   They are all dumb dogs,
   They cannot bark;
   Dreaming, lying down,
   Loving to slumber.
11. Yea, the dogs are greedy,
   They can never have enough;
   And these are [2] shepherds that cannot understand:
   They have all turned to their own way,
   Each one to his gain, [3] from every quarter.

[1] Gr. *behold how they are all blinded.* [2] Gr. *wicked.* [3] Gr. om.

but others are still to be gathered — citizens of other lands. "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring" (John 10: 16).

56 : 9–57 : 13. This passage, which is in no way connected with the last, seems to reflect the disorder and degradation of the times of Ezra-Nehemiah-Malachi (about 450 B.C.). The leaders are greedy, sensual, callous, the people are no better than pagans; and the blow must fall.

The Leaders (56 : 9–12)

9. **The beasts** are the heathen (cf. Ezek. 34 : 8) summoned to devour wicked Israel.

10 f. The **watchmen**, the spiritual leaders of Israel, are compared to sheep dogs (Job 30 : 1), but they are **blind**, see no danger (though the situation is so desperate), and **dumb**, lift up no voice against it, because they are themselves idle, sensual, and selfish. In vs. 11 omit *and these . . . cannot understand* (as explanatory of *watchmen*), and *from every quarter*.

12. [1] "Come ye," *say they*, "I will fetch wine,
And we will fill ourselves with strong drink;
And to-morrow shall be as this day,
A day great beyond measure."
57. The righteous perisheth, and no man
Layeth it to heart;
And [2] merciful men are taken away,
None considering
That the righteous is taken away [3] from the evil *to come.*
2. He entereth into peace;
They rest in their beds,
Each one that walketh [4] in his uprightness.

[1] Gr. om. vs. 12. [2] m. *godly.* [3] m. *through wickedness.* [4] m. *straight before him.*

12. A graphic description of these besotted "pastors."

The Consequence of Bad Leadership (57:1 f.)

57:1. Under such leaders good men perish, and nobody cares. **Merciful men**, rather *men of piety*. *None considering*, which is parallel to *no man layeth it to heart*, should be followed by a colon, and **that** should be *for*. **The evil** is not the evil to come, but the existing evil. Thus — *godly men are swept away, none considering; for before the evil the righteous is swept away.*

2. The **peace** is that of the grave, and the **bed** is the bier or grave. Such a peace is welcome in these troubled times.

57:3–13. The people here denounced as guilty of apostasy and idolatry are probably the descendants of those Judæans who had been left in the land, when the others had been carried into exile. Partly through the absence in Babylon of those who might have fostered nobler ideals, and partly through the influx of alien elements, the religion of this native population grew very corrupt; and it is no surprise to find them in this period on friendly terms with the Samaritans, themselves of mixed origin and syncretistic religion (2 Kings 17:24–41). They created a grave problem for the reformers, as we can see from Ezra-Nehemiah, and from this and other passages in the prophecy of the period.

The Idolatrous People (57:3–13)

3. But draw near hither,
   Ye [1] sons of the sorceress,
   The seed of the adulterer and the whore.
4. Against whom do ye sport yourselves?
   Against whom make ye a wide mouth,
   And draw out the tongue?
   Are ye not children of transgression,
   A seed of falsehood,
5. [2] Ye that inflame yourselves [3] among the oaks,
   Under every green tree;
   That slay the children in the valleys,
   [4] Under the clefts of the rocks?
6. Among the smooth *stones* of the valley is thy portion;
   They, they are thy lot:

[1] Gr. *wicked sons.* [2] Gr. *ye that call upon idols.* [3] m. *with idols.* [4] Gr. *among.*

3. **But as for you**, the people, not the leaders — a new address. For **adulterer**, read perhaps *adulteress*. An Oriental reviles a man most effectively by reviling his mother; the verse simply means that the people *themselves* were adulterous, *i.e.* unfaithful to Jehovah and devoted to other gods, apostate and idolatrous, *sorcery* being one of the consequences or aspects of this apostasy (cf. 2:6). In the Old Testament idolatry is frequently described, as here, in terms of adultery.

4. The second clause describes the gestures of the mocking **sport**. The contempt with which the pious Jews and their efforts were treated by their opponents is well illustrated by Neh. 4:1–3.

5. The apostate worship involves immorality and child sacrifice.

6. *Idolatry in the valleys.* There is a play upon the words **smooth** and **portion** (much alike in the Hebrew) which it is impossible to reproduce in English. The reference may be to stone worship (cf. Gen. 28:18), but it is by no means certain that stones are meant at all; the allusion may be to smooth, *i.e.* flattering, deceptive, *gods* of the valley. Whatever they were, it was **they**

Even to them hast thou poured a drink offering,
Thou hast offered [1] an oblation.
Shall I be appeased for these things?

7. Upon a high and lofty mountain
Hast thou set thy bed:
Thither also wentest thou up
To offer sacrifice.

8. And behind the doors and the posts
Hast thou set up thy memorial:
For [2] thou hast discovered *thyself* to another than me,
and art gone up;
Thou hast enlarged thy bed,

And made thee a covenant with them;
Thou lovedst their bed
Where [3] thou sawest it.

9. And [4] thou wentest to the king with ointment,
And didst increase [5] thy perfumes,

[1] m. *a meal offering.* [2] Gr. *thou didst expect to gain by departing from me.* [3] SV m *thou providedst room for it.* [4] Gr. *thou didst multiply thy harlotry with them.* [5] Gr. *those who were far from thee.*

(very emphatic) that were the people's lot and portion, whereas *Jehovah* should have been their portion (Ps. 16:5). The last clause appears to be a later addition.

7. *Idolatry upon the hills:* described in terms of adultery (cf. vs. 3).

8. *Idolatry in the home.* On the **doors** and **posts**, where the law ordained that a text should be inscribed (Deut. 6:9; 11:20), had been set up a **memorial**, or more probably, *male* emblem, symbolic of fertility. The rest of the verse should read: *for, kindled by it (i.e.* by this emblem), *thou hast uncovered, ascended, and enlarged thy bed, and didst buy for thyself some whose bed thou lovest, and didst multiply thy harlotry with them* (Gr. rightly adds this clause), *and didst look upon the emblem.*

9. **Thou wentest to the king**: read, *Thou didst anoint thyself for*

And didst send thine ambassadors far off,
And didst debase thyself even unto [1] hell.

10. Thou wast wearied with the length of thy way;
Yet saidst thou not, "There is no hope."
Thou didst find [2] a quickening of thy strength;
Therefore thou wast not [3] faint.

11. And of whom hast thou been afraid and in fear,
That thou liest,
And hast not remembered me,
Nor laid it to thy heart?

[4] Have not I held my peace even of long time,
And thou fearest me not?

12. I will declare thy "righteousness";
And as for thy works,

[1] Heb. *Sheol.* [2] Heb. *the life of thine hand.* [3] Heb. *sick.* [4] Gr. *when I see thee, I ignore thee.*

Melech, i.e. Milcom, god of the Ammonites; an appropriate allusion, as Tobiah, who was hostile to the reformers, was an Ammonite (Neh. 2: 10). The *ointment* and *perfumes*, as among the "harlot's" devices, belong to the symbolism of the passage. The meaning becomes more plain in the next clause, where **ambassadors** are sent to the shrines of foreign gods, and even the gods of **Sheol** (so margin), the oracles of the nether world, are consulted. There may here be an allusion to necromantic practices.

10. Though tired of it all, the people did not abandon hope.

11. **Of whom**? — brazen-faced apostates, afraid of nobody. **Liest**, *hast played the traitor.* **Have not I held my peace even of long time**? read, *Is it not so? I indeed kept silence, and hid* (*mine eyes*). The divine silence had encouraged the apostates in their audacity.

12 f. *I will expose thy "righteousness,"* forsooth (this is ironical), *and thy works* — the false worship described in vss. 6–10. The

13. They shall not profit thee. When thou criest,
[1] Let [2] them which thou hast gathered deliver thee;

But the wind shall take them,
A breath shall carry them all away:
But he that putteth his trust in me shall possess the land,
And shall inherit my holy mountain.

BLESSINGS IN STORE FOR THE FAITHFUL (57:14–21)

14. And [3] he shall say,
Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way,
Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.
15. For thus saith the high and lofty One
That inhabiteth eternity, [4] whose name is Holy:

[1] Gr. *let them deliver thee in thine affliction.* [2] m. *thy rabble* of idols. [3] m. *it shall be said;* Vg. *I* (Gr. *they*) *will say.* [4] Gr. *Holy among holy ones is his name, the most High resting among holy ones.*

rest of vs. 12 should be taken with vs. 13, and **them which thou hast gathered** read as *thine abominations* (*i.e.* the idols). Thus: *and, when thou criest, thine abominations shall neither profit nor save thee.* The faithful Jews, on the other hand, were to possess the **holy mountain**, *i.e.* not Zion, but the mountain *land* (Judah).

57:14–21. This picture of the fellowship of the faithful with God and the prosperity in store for them is the counterpart of the last — the doom of the idolaters.

14. **And he** (one, or perhaps *Jehovah*) **shall say**: the clause, suggested by 40:6, is unsatisfactory, and should probably be deleted. **Cast up**, *i.e.* a highway. The verse is modelled on 40:3. The way of the Lord is to be prepared by the removal of all social, political, and especially spiritual impediments (vss. 15, 18) — **stumbling-blocks.**

15. **In the high and holy place**: rather, *on high as the Holy one* (cf. 6:1, 3). The exaltation of God is one aspect of his holiness (cf. 6:1, 3). To believing men who are weighted with a load of affliction or sorrow the thought of the *exaltation* and the *eternity*

"I will dwell in the high and holy place,
With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

16. For I will not contend for ever,
Neither will I be always wroth:
For the spirit should [1] fail before me,
And the souls which I have made.

17. For the iniquity [2] of his covetousness was I wroth
And smote him, I hid *my face* and was wroth:
And he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.
18. I have seen his ways,

And will heal him: I will lead him also,
And [3] restore comforts unto him
Heb. 13:15 19. And to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips:
Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near,"
Saith the LORD; and I will heal him.

[1] m. *faint away;* SV. *faint.* [2] Gr. *a little while.* [3] Heb. *recompense.*

of God comes as a consolation. For **of a contrite and humble spirit**, read *crushed and lowly in spirit:* crushed by such affliction and misery as Nehemiah (1:3) found on his arrival at Jerusalem. It is precisely with such *lowly* people that the *lofty* God makes his home. The afflicted were, speaking broadly, the faithful; having nothing, they had yet patience, hope, and God, and he put new heart, courage, into these *crushed* (rather than **contrite**) ones.

16. **Spirit = souls** = persons: the faithful Jews are specially in view. To abandon them to destruction would be for Jehovah to defeat his object in creating them.

17–19. **For the iniquity . . . wroth**: read, with Gr., *because of his guilt* (idolatry, 6 ff.) *I was wroth for a moment* (cf. 54:7). **I have seen his ways**, *i.e.* seen to purpose and chastised. The text of the next few words is in some disorder. *I will heal him* occurs twice, and should probably be dropped from vs. 19, whose *saith the*

20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea;
For it cannot rest,
And its waters cast up mire and dirt.
21. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

The True and the False Worship (Chap. 58)

Fasting (58:1–12)

58. Cry [1] aloud, spare not;
Lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
And declare unto my people their transgression,
And to the house of Jacob their sins.

[1] Heb. *with the throat.*

Lord should be transferred to vs. 18 — after *ways*. Instead of **I will lead him**, read, by a change of pointing, *I will give him rest.* **And to his mourners** should be transferred to vs. 19. The whole will then read as follows:

His ways have I seen, saith Jehovah,
And I will heal him, and give him rest,
And I will requite him with comfort,
And for his mourners do I create the fruit of the lips,
Peace, peace, to the far and the near.

The fruit of the lips, praise and thanksgiving. **Peace** = prosperity. The **far** and the **near** are the Jews dispersed far from, or living near, Jerusalem.

20 f. In contrast with this bright destiny of the faithful is the doom of the wicked, who are forever stirring up foul strife in the community, restless like the waves of the sea (cf. 48:22).

Chap. 58. The people are wondering why, in spite of their punctilious observance of certain fast-days, the final salvation for which they look is still delayed. The prophet replies that the only fast acceptable to Jehovah is a fast from oppression and social injustice, or rather that there must be the positive exercise of kindness and generosity towards the needy and destitute. Their conception of worship was ceremonial, his was moral; the true worship of God is the service of man, — a much-needed lesson, but by no means new in Israel (cf. 1:10–17).

1. **Cry aloud**: this is the prophet's commission from God; and

2. Yet they seek me daily,
And delight to know my ways:
As a nation that did righteousness,
And forsook not the ordinance of their God,

They ask of me righteous ordinances,
They delight to draw near unto God.
3. "Wherefore have we fasted," *say they*, "and thou seest not?
Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?"

Behold, in the day of your fast ye find *your own* pleasure,
And [1] exact all your labours.
4. Behold, ye fast for strife and contention,
And [2] to smite with the fist of wickedness.

[1] m. *oppress all your labourers.* [2] Gr. if *ye smite with fists the lowly, wherefore do ye fast unto me, as* ye do *to-day, that your voice may be heard in crying?*

one important function of the true prophet is to bring sin home to the public conscience, **to declare unto my people their transgression** (cf. Mic. 3:8).

2 f. The people have all the appearance of piety, **they ask** through their priests and prophets (Zech. 7:3) about the **righteous ordinances**, *i.e.* the correct forms of worship, but it is questions of *fasting* (as in Zech. 7), rather than conduct, that interest them.

3. During and after the exile, four great fast-days were celebrated to commemorate specially tragic incidents in connection with the siege and fate of Jerusalem. The people wish to know why their God *took no notice* of all this fasting; *i.e.* why the Messianic salvation was still delayed. The prophet begins his answer with the word **Behold**. The religious exercise was accompanied by a worldly spirit; **you find** opportunity for **your own business** (rather than *pleasure*). The margin of the last clause is more correct than the text; rest day though it is for you, *you drive all your laborers like taskmasters.* The last (English) word, however, is very uncertain; and some emend the test in a way which shows the particular form their *business* took — *and all money lent on pledge you exact.*

Ye fast not this day so
As to make your voice to be heard on high.
5. Is such the fast that I have chosen?
The day for a man to afflict his soul?

Is it to bow down his head as a rush,
And to spread sackcloth and ashes under him?
Wilt thou call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the LORD?

6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? [1]
To loose the bonds of wickedness,
To undo the bands of the yoke,
And to let the oppressed go free,
And that [2] ye break every yoke?

[1] Gr. adds *saith the Lord.* [2] Gr. Vg. *thou.*

4. **Strife**: the fasting made them quarrelsome and violent, so that they actually **smite the poor** (as, with Gr., we should probably read) **with the fist**, and *such fasting as yours to-day will not cause your voice to be heard on high* by the God who cares for conduct, not ceremony.

5. The fasting was regarded as an *affliction of the soul, i.e.* a discipline of the sensuous impulses. But the fasting *acceptable* to Jehovah has nothing to do with hanging heads and beds of sackcloth and ashes. By omitting **Is it**, the meaning is more clear and vigorous: *To bow the head . . . is this what thou callest a fast?*

6. In opposition to the false fast is the true, which consists in abstinence of another kind — from social injustice; or which consists rather in the positive and generous relief of every kind of social distress. The verse almost seems to reflect the situation so graphically described in Neh. 5: 1–13, where the poor had been driven to mortgage their property to their wealthier brethren, and even to sell their children. **The bonds of wickedness**, "unjust and oppressive obligations" (Skinner). Every galling yoke must be broken; this is the divine demand — the *fast that I choose.*

7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry,
And that thou bring the poor [1] that are cast out to thy house?

When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him;
And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?
8. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning,
And thy healing shall spring forth speedily:

And thy righteousness shall go before thee;
The glory of the LORD shall be thy rearward.
9. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer;
Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, "Here I am."

If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke,
The putting forth of the finger, and speaking wickedly;
10. And if thou [2] draw out thy soul to the hungry,
And satisfy the afflicted soul;

[1] Gr. *roofless.* [2] Gr. *givest bread from thy soul to the hungry.*

7. The touches in this verse are more concrete than in the ast; both may well be drawn from life. Nehemiah (5 : 17) had himself **dealt** his **bread to the hungry**. Omit **the poor**, and for **that are cast out** read *wanderers*, vagrants. **Thine own flesh**, fellow-Israelites.

8 f. **Then**: this is the conduct that will bring the blessing — **healing**, *i.e.* recovery, restoration; **light**, prosperity, salvation; and an *answer* (vs. 9) to the yet unanswered prayer (vs. 3). What light and healing involved on the material side is elaborated in vs. 12. If **righteousness** of the kind just described went before, salvation and **the glory of Jehovah** would follow after; this sentence, which summarizes the prophet's message in this chapter, is modelled on 52 : 12b. **The putting forth of the finger** — in scorn.

The general thought of vss. 6–9a is again expressed somewhat similarly in vss. 9b–12.

10 f. For **draw out thy soul to**, read *bestow thy bread on* (so in part, Gr.); and for **make strong thy bones**, perhaps *renew thy strength.* Judah, if she worshipped her God by serving the needy,

Then shall thy light rise in darkness,
And thine obscurity be as the noonday:
11. And the LORD shall [1] guide thee continually,

And [2] satisfy thy soul in dry places,
And make [3] strong thy bones;
And thou shalt be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

12. And [4] they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places:
Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations;
And thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach,
The Restorer of Paths to dwell in.

The Sabbath (58:13, 14)

13. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,
From doing thy pleasure on my holy day;

[1] Gr. *be with.* [2] Gr. *thou shalt be satisfied according as thy soul desireth.* [3] Gr. *fat.* [4] Gr. *thine old waste places shall be built.*

would be perennially fresh, fair, and secure, enjoying his unceasing guidance and protection.

12. This verse shows that one very important element in the salvation contemplated would be the rebuilding of the ruins of Jerusalem, which were old enough to be described in the terms of this verse, as the city had been destroyed about a century and a quarter before (B.C. 586–450?). For **they that shall be of thee**, read perhaps *thy sons*. Great would be the glory of the generation that repaired the ruined walls (cf. Neh. 6) and restored the city.

58:13 f. These verses, emphasizing the scrupulous and cheerful observance of the sabbath (cf. 56:2) as a test of fidelity to Jehovah, form an interesting counterpart to the emphasis on ethical obligations in vss. 1–12. Structurally they closely resemble vss. 7–9.

13. The sabbath is Jehovah's, is is holy ground (hence **turn**

And call the sabbath a delight,
[1] *And* the holy of the LORD honourable;
And shalt honour it, not doing thine own ways,
Nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words:
14. Then shalt thou [2] delight thyself in the LORD;
And I will make thee to ride upon the [3] high places of the earth;
And I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father:
For the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

THE SINFUL PEOPLE AND THE DIVINE DELIVERANCE (Chap. 59)

The Sins (59:1–8)

59. Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save;
Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

[1] Gr. *holy unto God; and shalt not lift up thy foot to work, nor speak a word in anger out of thy mouth.* [2] Gr. *trust.* [3] Gr. *good.*

away thy foot; cf. Ex. 3:5); and it must not be profaned by doing *thy business* (rather than **pleasure**) on it, for it is **the holy of Jehovah** — a remarkable phrase (unless we read for "holy" *new moon*, as Duhm has proposed). **Nor speaking words**, *i.e.* idle words; the Hebrew was always keenly conscious of the perils of speech (cf. Eccl. 5:2; Jas 3:8).

14. **To ride** triumphantly **over the high places**, etc. **I will feed thee**, cause thee to eat, enjoy. The promise is one of "triumph over all difficulties, and undisturbed enjoyment of the products of the land" (Marti).

Chap. 59. The people, whose punctilious observance of fasting was satirized in the last chapter, are here represented — significantly enough — as an immoral people, whose civic life was corrupt to the core. Their apostasy took the form, not only of idolatry, (Chap. 57), but of immorality (vss. 1–8). In the name of the

2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God,
And [1] your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3. For your hands are defiled with blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies,
Your tongue muttereth wickedness.

4. None sueth in righteousness,
And none pleadeth in truth:
They trust in vanity, and speak lies;
They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

5. They hatch [2] basilisks' eggs,
And weave the spider's web:
He that eateth of their eggs dieth,
And that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper.

[1] Gr. *because of your sins he has turned away his face from you so as not to have compassion.* [2] m. SV. *adders'.*

people, however, the prophet confesses their sins (vss. 9–15); and, to deliver them from their desperate case, Jehovah himself is pictured as coming like a warrior fully armed (vss. 16–21).

1 f. If the long-looked for salvation was still delayed (cf. 58:3), it was not because of Jehovah's impotence, but because of the sins which are described in the following verses.

3 f. Deeds (cf. 1:15) and words are alike immoral; in particular, justice is travestied in the courts, where arguments are specious and mischievous, and honesty is unknown.

5–8. Several recent scholars believe these verses to be an interpolation. In any case, as Skinner remarks, "the description can only apply to a limited class of utter reprobates, and there is some difficulty in conceiving that it can be the continuation of vss. 3, 4, which contain perfectly definite and intelligible accusations against a whole community."

5 f. The **basilisks' eggs**, symbolic of the schemes hatched by the wicked, are fatal alike to those who *eat* them (cherish them), and

6. Their webs shall not become garments,
Neither shall they cover themselves with their works:
Their works are works of iniquity,
And the act of violence is in their hands.

Rom. 3: 15 ff.

7. Their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed innocent blood:
Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity;
Desolation and destruction are in their paths.

8. The way of peace they know not;
And there is no [1] judgement in their goings:
They have made them crooked paths;
Whosoever goeth therein doth not know peace.

The Confession (59:9–15)

9. Therefore is judgement far from us,
Neither doth righteousness overtake us:
We look for light, but behold darkness;
For brightness, but we walk in obscurity.

[1] m. *right;* SV. *justice.*

to those who attempt to *crush* them. As this figure brings out the *deadly* nature of those schemes, the other figure of the **spider's web**, which is amplified in vs. 6, brings out their *futility*. The plots they weave are fraught with no good to the body politic; they are not as a garment, with which *men can cover themselves*. There is a play on the word **works**, which moves from the sense of "handiwork," in the first half of the verse, to "deed" in the second half.

8. **Judgment**, right, justice. **Goings**, tracks.

59:9–15. The lament (vss. 9–11) passes into a confession (12 ff.) — both in the first person plural, as the prophet speaks for the people.

9 f. **Therefore**: because of the sins just described (cf. vss. 1, 2). **Judgment** and **righteousness**, *i.e.*, the divine vindication of Israel,

10. We grope for the wall like the blind,
Yea, we grope as they that have no eyes:
We stumble at noonday as in the twilight;
[1] Among them that are lusty we are as dead men.

11. We roar all like bears,
And mourn sore like doves:
We look for judgement, but there is none;
For salvation, but it is far from us.

12. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee,
And our sins testify against us:
For our transgressions are with us,
And as for our iniquities, we know them:

13. In transgressing and denying the LORD,
And turning away from following our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14. And judgement is turned away backward,
And righteousness standeth afar off:
For truth is fallen in the street,
And uprightness cannot enter.

[1] Gr. *they shall groan as dying men.*

practically = *salvation*, as vs. 11 and 56: 1 make clear. **Among them that are lusty**, etc., in place of this obscure and uncertain phrase, Cheyne has suggested, *We dwell in darkness as the dead.*

11. **Like** hungry **bears**. **Judgment**, *justice* = **salvation**.

12–14. **Our transgressions are with us** — we are conscious of them. It is interesting to find apostasy, **turning away from our God**, which in Chap. 57 took the form of idolatry, here expressed in terms of morality. The great apostasy is the ignoring of moral principles in the conduct of civic life — its legal (*justice* and *right-*

15. Yea, truth is lacking;
And he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:
And the LORD saw it, and it displeased him
That there was no [1]judgement.

The Deliverance (59:16–21)

16. And he saw that there was no man,
And wondered that there was [2]no intercessor:
Therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him;
And his righteousness, it upheld him.

Eph. 6:14, 17
1 Thes. 5:8

17. And he put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And an helmet of salvation upon his head;

[1] SV *justice.* [2] m. *none to interpose.*

eousness; cf. vs. 4), commercial, and social relations; these are the transgressions which have deferred the great salvation. The personifications in vs. 14 are vivid and powerful, and the gravity of sins of the tongue is suggested by vs. 13, as so frequently in both Old and New Testaments. In vs. 13, for **oppression**, read *perverseness*, and omit *conceiving and.*

15. The meaning of the second sentence is far from certain. Marti's emendation, which rests in part upon the Greek version and maintains the parallelism well, seems the most plausible. *Truth is missing, and insight departs from the city* (or *the gate* or *the rulers*). **Judgment**, justice.

59:16–21. The situation is desperate, and, as there is no man to relieve it, Jehovah himself comes fully armed, to punish those opposed to him, and to effect for the penitent a deliverance which will be the wonder of the whole world. Vss. 18–20 make it plain that the picture of Jehovah's interposition is a vision of the future, consequently vss. 16 f., which describe his arming, refer to the future too — the past tenses indicating, as frequently, prophetic certitude.

16. This verse appears to be modelled on 63:5. For **no intercessor**, read with the margin *none to interpose.* Apparently the pious and energetic Nehemiah was not yet on the scene.

17. The fullest description in the Old Testament of Jehovah as a

And he put on garments of vengeance [1] for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloke.

18. According to their [2] deeds, accordingly he will repay,
Fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies;
[3] To the islands he will repay recompence.
19. So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west,
And his glory from the rising of the sun.

[4] For he shall come as [5] a rushing stream,
Which the breath of the LORD driveth.
20. And [6] a redeemer shall come to Zion, Rom 11: 26 f.
And unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

21. And as for me, this is my covenant with them,
Saith the LORD:
My spirit that is upon thee,
And my words which I have put in thy mouth,

[1] Gr. Vg. om. [2] Heb. *recompences.* [3] Gr. om. this clause. [4] m. AV *when the adversary* (AV *enemy*) *shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.* [5] Heb. *a stream pent in.* [6] Gr. *for Zion's sake the deliverer shall come and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

"man of war" (Exod. 15:3), and the model for the New Testament descriptions of the Christian's armor (1 Thess. 5:8; Eph. 6:14–17). Omit, with Gr., *for clothing.*

18. Read: *in proportion to (their) deserts, will he render a recompense*, etc., and delete the last clause, which erroneously explains the adversaries as **the islands**, *i.e.* the heathen, whereas they are in reality apostates within the Jewish community (vss. 1–15).

19. This terrible judgment will carry the fear and fame of Jehovah throughout the whole world — this judgment which *will come* rushing on impetuously *as a stream pent* within its banks, *which the breath of Jehovah* (*i.e.* a mighty wind) *driveth.*

20. **He shall come** to the wicked as an impetuous stream of destruction, but **as Redeemer to Zion**, and to the penitent.

21. This verse, guaranteeing the perpetuity of the happy relations now established between Jehovah and Zion, is in the nature

Shall not depart out of thy mouth,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed,
Nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD,
From henceforth and for ever.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (Chap. 60)

Rev. 21: 11, 23 ff

60. [1] Arise, shine; for thy light is come,
And the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

[1] Gr. *shine, shine, Jerusalem.*

of a somewhat prosaic appendix. *Them* and *thee* alike refer to Israel. The chief elements in the new *covenant* are **my spirit** — the divine spirit of *instruction* (Neh. 9: 20, Ps. 32: 8); — and **my words**, no doubt the words of the law, which, as in Ps. 1: 2, are to be perpetually in Israel's mind. This description is highly characteristic of post-exilic Judaism.

Chap. 60. Chapter 59 closed with a vision of Jehovah coming to Zion as redeemer (vs. 20); Chaps. 60–62 together form a magnificent picture of Zion Redeemed. Here, as everywhere in the Old Testament, material elements play a not inconsiderable part in the idea of salvation. Through the eyes of faith and imagination, the prophet sees a brilliant future for the city that is now despised and detested (60: 19), dilapidated and forlorn, suffering from poverty and exposed to raids (60: 18; 62: 8). He sees this city crowded again with her own children from distant lands, through her gates tribute ceaselessly pouring from the ends of the earth with which temple and city will be worthily adorned, all her area illuminated continually by the glorious light of her own God, and foreign peoples streaming to her to share this wonderful light. A splendid flight for a prophet whose environment was so meagre and unpromising as Jerusalem in the middle of the fifth century B.C.

Jerusalem, illumined by Jehovah, will be the Light of the World (vss. 1–3)

1. **Arise**: the city is addressed as a prostrate woman (52: 1). The **light** — *i.e.* of *salvation*—which will dawn for her, when **the glory of Jehovah**, who will come as Redeemer (59: 20), rises, like the sun, upon her; vss. 19 f., however, show that the light is

2. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth,
And gross darkness the peoples;
But the LORD shall arise upon thee,
And his glory shall be seen upon thee.
3. And nations shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.

4. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see:
They all gather themselves together, they come to thee:
Thy sons shall come from far,
And thy daughters shall be [1] carried [2] in the arms.
5. Then thou shalt see and [3] be lightened,
And thine heart shall tremble and be enlarged;
Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned unto thee,
The wealth of the nations shall come unto thee.

[1] Heb. *nursed upon the side.* [2] Gr. *on shoulders.* [3] AV *flow together;* SV *be radiant;* Gr. *fear.*

conceived in part physically. The whole chapter is really a vision of the future (cf. vs. 22), but to the eye of faith, it is already as good as **come**.

2 f. **The earth, the peoples**, being without Israel's God, are in darkness; but **upon thee** (emphatic), Jehovah shall arise — consequently **nations** desirous of that light must **come** to Jerusalem for it.

To Jerusalem the Jews will come from the Lands where they are scattered, and the Heathen from East and West with their Treasures (vss. 4–9)

4 f. *The Jews' return.* **In the arms**, rather *upon the side*, *i.e.* the hip — a mode of carrying children in the East. The meaning is that they will be brought home (by the heathen, cf. 49:22) with as much care as children are carried by nurses; and, at the sight, *thou shalt be radiant, and thy heart shall tremble* for very joy, *and be enlarged* (opposite of *distressed*). Besides her own sons and daughters, there comes to Jerusalem **the wealth of the nations**, also called **the abundance of the sea**, *i.e.* of products of other

6. The multitude of camels shall cover thee,
The [1] dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
They shall all come from Sheba:
They shall bring gold and frankincense,[2]
And shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.
7. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee,
The rams of Nebaioth [3] shall minister unto thee:
They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar,
And [4] I will glorify the house of my glory.

8. Who are these that fly as a cloud,
And as the doves [5] to their windows?
9. Surely the isles shall wait for me,
And the ships of Tarshish first,

[1] m. *young camels.* [2] Two Gr. MSS. add *and precious stones.* [3] Gr. *shall come.* [4] Gr. *my house of prayer shall be glorified.* [5] Gr. *with* their *young ones.*

lands carried upon the sea. Post-exilic Judaism loved to think of the heathen world as contributing to the glory of Jerusalem and its temple (cf. Hag. 2:7).

6 f. *Tribute from the East.*

6. **Midian** in north Arabia, **Ephah** a Midianite tribe (Gen. 25:4), **Sheba** in southwestern Arabia. Omit *they shall bring gold and frankincense,* and read *all* (and not merely the queen, as in Solomon's time, 1 Kings 10) *those of Sheba shall come, and proclaim the praises of Jehovah.*

7. **Kedar, Nebaioth**: nomads of north Arabia, rich in flocks. For **minister**, which appears to come from vs. 10, read, by a slight change, *shall earnestly seek thee* (*i.e.* Zion): these animals would be offered in scarifice. **The house of my glory**: Gr. reads, perhaps correctly, *my house of prayer* (cf. 56:7).

8 f. *Tribute from the west.* Flying swiftly, like *clouds* or like *doves to their cotes* (cf. Gen. 8:9), are descried ships bearing exiles and treasure. This fine picture is somewhat obscured by the first clause of vs. 9, whose reading, affected by 42:4; 51:5, should almost certainly be:

For to me the ships gather,
The vessels of Tarshish — cf. 2:16 — ***in the van.***

To bring thy sons from far,
Their silver and their gold with them,
For the name of the LORD thy God,
And for the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

10. And strangers shall build up thy walls,
And their kings shall minister unto thee.
For in my wrath I smote thee,
But in my favour have I had mercy on thee.
11. Thy gates also shall be open continually;
They shall not be shut day nor night;
That men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations,
And their kings led *with them*.
12. For that nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

13. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee,
The fir tree, the pine, and the box tree together;
To beautify the place of my sanctuary,
[1] And I will make the place of my feet glorious.

[1] Gr. om. this clause.

Jerusalem will be rebuilt by Foreign Hands and at Foreign Cost, and supplicated by her Former Tyrants (vss. 10–16)

10–12. **Strangers**: many of the later Jews thought with pleasure of other nations as their menials (cf. vs. 5); in point of fact, the walls were built by Nehemiah, cf. Neh. 6. The **gates** are to be continually open to receive the endless stream of treasure. **Their kings** *leading the train* (better than *led*). Recent scholars regard vs. 12, which spoils the metre, as an intrusion, based on Zech. 14: 16–19.

13. **The glory of Lebanon**, etc.: the temple buildings demand the choicest wood. **The place of my feet**: Jerusalem, especially

14. And the sons of them that afflicted thee shall come
bending unto thee;
And all they that despised thee [1] shall bow themselves
down at the soles of thy feet;
And they shall call thee the City of the LORD,
The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15. Whereas thou hast been forsaken
And hated, so that no man [2] passed through thee,
I will make thee an eternal excellency,
A joy of many generations.
16. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the nations,
And shalt [3] suck the breast of kings;
And thou shalt know that I the LORD am thy saviour,
And thy redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17. For brass I will bring gold,
And for iron I will bring silver,
And for wood brass,
And for stones iron:

[1] Gr. om. this clause. [2] Gr. *helped thee.* [3] Gr. *consume the wealth of kings.*

the temple, was, as it were, the place where Jehovah, who dwells on high (57:15), touches the earth.

14. Obeisance is now paid to Zion by those who formerly crushed and despised her. Read *afflicted and despised thee;* and omit, with Gr., *all shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet.*

16. For **suck the breast**, Gr. reads *consume the wealth* (of kings). The thought is similar to that of vss. 5, 10. This control of Gentile resources is the proof to the Jew of Jehovah's redemptive power (cf. 49:26).

This Outward Glory of Jerusalem will be matched by an Inner Glory (vs. 17–22)

17. Beauty and order everywhere. The plain metals will be replaced by the precious; *and I will make Peace thy governor, and*

I will also make thy officers peace,
And [1] thine exactors righteousness.
18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land,
Desolation nor destruction within thy borders;
But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation,
And thy gates Praise.

19. The sun shall be no more thy light by day;
Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee.[2]
But the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, Rev. 21:11; 22:5
And thy God thy glory.
20. Thy sun shall no more go down,
Neither shall thy moon withdraw itself:
For the LORD shall be thine everlasting light,
And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

21. Thy people shall be all righteous,
They shall inherit the land for ever;

[1] m. *thy taskmasters.* [2] Gr. adds *by night.*

Righteousness thy lord — these to replace the Persian officials and the rapacious Jewish "pastors" (56:11). The clause *and for wood brass, and for stones iron,* which, besides contradicting vs. 13 with its various woods, itself involves a somewhat futile thought, is omitted by some.

18. **Violence**, whether from the neighboring peoples (62:8) or from Jews themselves (58:4). The walls were to be called **Salvation**, because they guarantee the safety of the city; and the gates **Praise**, because through them stream the heathen with their gifts.

19 f. **The sun**, etc. These two verses clearly show that the light of Jehovah is more than a symbol for the blessings of redemption; there comes from it a real illumination of the city. The poem strikingly ends, as it began (vss. 1–3), with this vision of the illumined city.

21 f. Now the righteous are disappearing (57:1), then they shall be **all righteous**. Besides character, numbers and permanent possession of the land are essential elements in the salvation con-

[1] The branch of [2] my planting,
The work of [3] my hands, that I may be glorified.
22. The little one shall become a thousand,
And the small one a strong nation:
I the LORD
Will hasten it in its time.

THE PROCLAMATION OF ZION'S REDEMPTION (61:1–62:12)

Lk. 4:18 f. Acts 10:38
61. The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me;
Because the LORD hath anointed me
To preach good tidings unto the [4] meek; he hath sent me
To bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,

[1] Gr. *preserving the plant.* [2] Heb. variant, *his.* [3] Gr. *his.* [4] m. Gr. *poor.*

templated by Judaism. **A thousand** should perhaps be translated *a clan.* **I will hasten it**, the brilliant programme sketched in this chapter.

Chaps. 61 and 62. Of these chapters, as of the last (Chap. 60), the theme is the glory and security of Zion in the coming year of grace which the prophet is commissioned to proclaim. The peculiarity of the section is the remarkable statement in the opening verses (61:1–3) of the terms of the prophet's commission, or at least of his interpretation of that commission. Some suppose that the speaker here is the Servant of Jehovah, the same or a similar figure to that which played so great a part in the prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah. But there the Servant was the *mediator* of salvation, here the speaker simply *proclaims* it; there the salvation was for the whole world, here it is only for Zion — for her enemies (63:3, 6) a day of vengeance (61:2; 63:4) is declared. On the whole, it is probable that the prophet himself is the speaker.

1 f. **The spirit**: the prophet is *inspired*, because **anointed**, *i.e.* consecrated. Here the prophet's task is to console, encourage, and inspire with hope; in 58:1, it was to convict of sin. The **meek** and **brokenhearted**, to whom the good news comes, are the victims of the social wrongs alluded to in 58:6, 9; the **captives** are those who were sold into slavery for debt (Neh. 5:5–8) —

And the [1] opening *of the prison* to [2] them that are
bound;
2. To proclaim [3] the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;

To comfort all that mourn;
3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,
To give unto them a garland for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they might be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.
4. And they shall build the old wastes,
They shall raise up the former desolations.

And they shall repair the waste cities,
The desolations of many generations.

[1] m. Gr. *opening* of the eyes. [2] Gr. *the blind*. [3] m. *the year of the Lord's good pleasure;* SV *the year of Jehovah's favor.*

though these three words may not impossibly be taken in a wider sense. In associating the **liberty** and release with **the year of Jehovah's favor** (see margin and SV), the writer is thinking perhaps of the law prescribing the emancipation of slaves in the seventh year, or of some law akin to that of the jubilee. The day of favor to Zion will be a **day of vengeance** upon the enemies of Zion (63:1–6).

In claiming to fulfil this prophecy, Jesus significantly omits the clause announcing vengeance (Lk. 4:17–21).

3. Delete *unto them that mourn in Zion, to give*, which spoils the metre, and needlessly explains who the mourners are of vs. 2. The words for *mourning* and *garment* should be transposed, reading:

Oil of joy for the garment of mourning,
A song of praise for a spirit dimmed.

Garland, turban, headdress; **ashes** on the head were a sign of mourning. For **that they might be**, read *and they shall be*. **Trees**, oaks; evergreen trees were emblems of the life of the righteous (Ps. 1:3). **Planting of Jehovah**, cf. 60:21.

5. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
And aliens shall be your plowmen and your vine-dressers.

Rev. 20:6 6. But ye shall be named the priests of the LORD:
Men shall call you the ministers of our God:
Ye shall eat the wealth of the nations,
And [1] in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

7. [2] For your shame *ye shall have* double;
And for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion:
Therefore in their land they shall possess double;
Everlasting joy shall be unto them.
8. For I the LORD love [3] judgement,
I hate robbery [4] with iniquity;

[1] m. *to their glory shall ye succeed;* Gr. *in their wealth ye shall be admired.* [2] Gr. *thus a second time shall they inherit the land, and everlasting joy,* etc. [3] SV *justice.* [4] m. *for* (or *with*) *a burnt offering;* AV *for burnt offering.*

4. The restoration of the dilapidated city was an object of passionate longing; cf. 58:12; 60:10.

5 f. **Strangers**, *i.e.* the heathen, are to be the servants of the Jews — a frequently expressed hope (60:10) — and their wealth at the disposal of the Jews (cf. 60:11; Hag. 2:7). The Jews themselves are to be **the priests of Jehovah**, *i.e.* they will have to teach the heathen, regarded as the uninitiated laity, how to worship the true God (cf. 2 Kings 17:27). **Boast**, the word is very uncertain. Cheyne happily proposes, "and with their splendor ye shall *adorn* yourselves."

7. The first two clauses, when emended, connect admirably with the rest of the verse. Thus:

Because shame was theirs in double measure,
And mockery and spitting (*i.e.* scorn, 50:6) *was their lot,*
Therefore, etc.

8. **Judgment**, *justice.* It is Jehovah's love of justice that will lead him to reverse the present position of the Jews and the heathen, who have vexed and robbed them. **Robbery with iniquity**, unjust robbery, such as heathen oppressors had perpetrated upon the Jews (cf. Neh. 5:15). **In truth**, *i.e.* faithfully. The

And I will [1]give them their recompence in truth,
And I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

9. And their seed shall be known among the nations,
And their offspring among the peoples:
All that see them shall acknowledge them,
That they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.
10. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,
He hath covered me with the robe of [2]righteousness,
As a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland,
And as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. Rev. 21 : 2
11. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud,
And as the garden causeth the things that are sown
in it to spring forth:
So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
To spring forth before all the nations.

62. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,

[1] AV *direct their work in truth.* [2] Gr. *joy.*

security and the reward are guaranteed by the **everlasting covenant** (cf. 55 : 3).

9. **Known**, *i.e.* famous. The prosperity of the Jews will be so conspicuous that it can only be accounted for as Jehovah's own blessing.

10. This verse seems to be a glad shout of joy raised by the people in response to the description of their *salvation*. **Righteousness** = salvation (cf. 62 : 1). Read, *as a bridegroom who fixes his turban* (same word as in vs. 3). The joy of the bridegroom and the bride was proverbial (62 : 5; Jer. 33 : 11).

11. **For** explains vs. 9, not vs. 10. The divine purpose to exalt Israel before the world (cf. 62 : 2) will be as surely fulfilled as are the great processes of nature.

62 : 1. **I**, the prophet; he will not be silent until Zion's **righteous-**

Until her righteousness go forth as brightness,
And her salvation as a lamp that burneth.
2. And the nations shall see thy righteousness,
And all kings thy glory:
Rev. 2:17 And thou shalt be called by a new name,
Which the mouth of the LORD shall name.
3. Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
And a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

4. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken;
Neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate:
But thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah,
And thy land Beulah:
For the LORD delighteth in thee,
And thy land shall be married.
5. For as a young man marrieth a virgin,
So shall thy sons marry thee:
And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride,
So shall thy God rejoice over thee.

---

ness, *i.e.* the vindication effected by her **salvation**, will be clear as noonday.

2. **Nations shall see**, etc. This vindication (vs. 1) must be visible and conspicuous to all the world. The **new name**, indicative of a new nature and character, is a mystery. The fact of the name being given in vs. 4 has led many scholars to regard the last half of vs. 2 as an interpolation.

3. Tutelary deities of cities are frequently depicted wearing a mural crown on the head; here the crown is **in Jehovah's hand**. "Jerusalem is the seat of Jehovah's world-wide sovereignty."

4 f. **Hephzi-bah** = my delight is in her, and **Beulah** = married (*i.e.* to Jehovah); **for** explains and justifies the preceding names. *Azubah*, which means **Forsaken**, and *Hephzi-bah* are actual names of women (Jehoshaphat's mother, 1 Kings 22:42, and Manasseh's mother, 2 Kings 21:1). The sons do not marry the mother, therefore **thy sons** should no doubt be pointed to read *thy builder*, *i.e.* he who builds up Jerusalem, Jehovah (cf. Ps. 147:2).

6. I have set watchmen
Upon thy walls, O Jerusalem;
They shall never hold their peace
Day nor night:
Ye that are the LORD'S remembrancers,
[1]Take ye no rest,
7. And give him no [2] rest,
Till he establish,
And till he make Jerusalem
A praise in the earth.

8. The LORD hath sworn by his right hand,
And by the arm of his strength,
"Surely I will no more give thy [3] corn
To be meat for thine enemies;
And strangers shall not drink thy wine,
For the which thou hast laboured:
9. But they that have garnered it shall eat it,
And praise the LORD;
And they that have gathered it shall drink it
In the courts of my sanctuary."

10. Go through, go through the gates;
Prepare ye the way of the people;

[1] m. *keep not silence.* [2] Heb. *silence.* SV *grain.*

6 f. The **watchmen** are the angelic ministers of Jehovah, his **remembrancers**, whose duty it is to put and keep him in mind of the ruined walls of Jerusalem (cf. 60: 10), until he again makes the city conspicuous and honorable.

8 f. Judah's territory is no more to be raided by the **enemies** — the Samaritans and their confederates (Neh. 4: 9). **Garnered** it, *i.e.* the corn; **gathered** it, *i.e.* grapes, wine. The Jews would **praise Jehovah** at the three great festivals (Deut. 16) in the temple **courts.**

Cast up, cast up the high way;
Gather out the stones;
Lift up an ensign for the peoples.
11. Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed
Unto the end of the earth,
Say ye to the daughter of Zion,
Behold, thy salvation cometh;
Behold, his reward is with him,
And his recompence before him.
12. And they shall call them, The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the LORD;
And thou shalt be called Sought Out,
A City not Forsaken.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FOES OF ZION (63 : 1–6)

63. "Who is this that cometh from Edom,
With [1] dyed garments from Bozrah?

[1] m. *crimsoned.*

An Appeal to the Jews at Home to prepare the Way for the Return of their Fellow-countrymen (vss. 10–12)

This passage, brief as it is, is strongly reminiscent of Deutero-Isaiah.

10. The people are urged to **go** out **through the gates** of Jerusalem, to **prepare the way** (cf. 40 : 3) for the rest of **the people** yet in exile. **An ensign** — to which they may rally (cf. 49 : 22).

11 f. **Jehovah hath proclaimed** the coming salvation (cf. 48 : 20). **His reward**, etc., cf. 40 : 10. **The holy people**, the world's *priests* (61 : 6). **Sought out**, much frequented — other than in the days when *no man passed through thee* (60 : 15).

63 : 1–6. The counterpart of Zion's glory (Chap. 60–62) is the annihilation of all her enemies (63 : 4). In this striking passage Jehovah, clad in a garment stained red with the blood of his foes, is seen returning from a victory which he had won over them single-handed — a victory which meant for Zion that the year of her complete redemption had come.

This that is glorious in his apparel,
[2] Marching in the greatness of his strength?"

"I that speak in righteousness,
Mighty to save."

2. "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel,
And thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?"

3. "I have trodden the wine press alone;
And of the peoples there was no man with me:
Yea, I trod them in mine anger,
And trampled them in my fury;

[2] Gr. om.

Our present Hebrew text represents the victory as won over Edom, and, considering how deep was the hatred of Judah for Edom after the exile (cf. Chap. 34), this fierce delight in the defeat of Edom is only too intelligible (cf. Ps. 137: 7). On the other hand, we should rather expect, as the counterpart and guarantee of Zion's glory, the destruction of *all* her enemies, and this expectation is confirmed by vss. 3, 6. When to this it is added that, by exceedingly slight changes, the references to Edom and Bozrah disappear, the high probability must be admitted that the passage had originally the larger outlook upon all the nations and contemplated their destruction.

1. **Who is this**? the question and answer are finely dramatic. **Edom** and **Bozrah** (a chief city of Edom) may be original, but very probably we should translate:

Who is this that cometh all red,
With garments more brilliant than those of a vintager?

1: Jehovah himself answers the question, though the detail of the answer is by no means certain. Perhaps it means that he not only *speaks of righteousness, i.e.* promises to vindicate his people by punishing their adversaries, but has power to carry his promise into effect.

2 f. Again the dramatic question and answer. The bloody slaughter is compared to the treading of grapes. **No man**, like

And their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,
And I have stained all my raiment.
4. For the day of vengeance was in mine heart,
And [1]the year of my redeemed is come.
5. And I looked, and there was none to help;
And I wondered that there was none to uphold:
Therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me;
And my [2]fury, it upheld me.
6. And I trod down the peoples in mine anger,
And [3]made them drunk in my fury,
And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."

Passionate Prayer for the Divine Favor (63 : 7–64 : 12)

Thanksgiving for Ancient Mercies (63 : 7–14)

7. I will make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the Lord,
And the praises of the Lord,

[1] m. *my year of redemption.* [2] Many Heb. MSS. *righteousness* (cf. 59 : 16). [3] Heb. variant, *brake them in pieces.*

Cyrus, for example: Jehovah destroyed Zion's enemies without human agency. The vision, though described throughout in past tenses (read "*was* sprinkled"), is really of the future.

4. **Vengeance** for Zion's enemies, *redemption* for Zion (cf. 61 : 2).

5 f. Cf. 59 : 16. **Made them drunk**, read with margin, *brake them in pieces*. The fierce attitude of this prophet to the nations is very unlike that of Deutero-Isaiah, who looks for their salvation (45 : 22).

63 : 7–64 : 12. This impassioned prayer is one of the most striking passages in the whole of the Old Testament. Beginning with a grateful recognition of the divine goodness to Israel in the days gone by, it sorrowfully asks where the great Benefactor is now, and entreats him, in words of tremendous passion, to return and manifest his ancient power. The sin of the people has indeed been great and grievous, but here it is frankly confessed, and an appeal

According to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us;
[1] And the great goodness toward the house of Israel,

[1] Gr. *The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel.*

is lifted to God in heaven to forgive and forget it, and to look down in pity upon his sorely afflicted people.

The misery which the prayer so vividly reflects may well be that of the period covered by the earlier chapters of this prophecy (56 ff.) — the period of Malachi. The only really concrete verses in the passage, however (63: 18 and 64: 10 f.) create a not inconsiderable difficulty. Little stress, perhaps, ought to be laid on 63: 18a, as the Hebrew words of our present text are ambiguous, the Greek version is quite different, and a plausible emendation has been proposed, which would seriously modify the meaning of both Greek and Hebrew; and the case of vs. 18b is complicated by the difficulty of determining whether *trodden down* has to be taken literally or figuratively — in other words, whether the sanctuary has really been destroyed or only her ordinances and worship treated with contempt (cf. Mal. 1: 12). The other reference (64: 10 f.) is unambiguous, but there is difficulty in fitting it into our period. Judah in general and Jerusalem in particular are a desolation, and the beautiful temple has been burned with fire.

Of what period could this be said? It is not likely that Zerubbabel's temple, built by the disappointed and poverty-stricken hands of the returned exiles (cf. Hag. 2: 3), could be described as the "holy and *beautiful* house"; in any case, we have no positive information that that temple was destroyed — that is only an inference from such passages as Neh. 1: 3. The beautiful house destroyed must either, then, be Solomon's temple, or the second temple at some date later than the middle of the fifth century. If the reference be to Solomon's temple, then two explanations are possible: either the whole passage comes (if not from the exile) from some period soon after the return, and before the second temple was built (say about 525 B.C.) — the objection to that being that, in point of date, this prayer then falls out of line with the preceding chapters of the prophecy (56 ff.); or, if the date be the same, the insignificant second temple is simply ignored, and the speaker's imagination sorrowfully dwells on the destruction of the glorious temple seventy years or so before — though this explanation is distinctly artificial, and out of harmony with the vivid passion of the words. There remains, however, the possibility that vss. 10–12 are later than their context, and that the

Which he hath bestowed on [1] them according to his mercies,
And according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses.

8. For he said, "Surely, they are my people,
Children that will not deal falsely":
So he was their Saviour.

9. [2] In all their affliction
He was afflicted, and the angel
Of his presence saved them:
In his love and in his pity
He redeemed them;

[1] Gr. *us.* [2] m. *in all their adversity he was no adversary;* Gr. *He became to them a saviour from all their distress; it was no messenger, or angel, but himself who saved them.*

beautiful house is the temple of a later century. Cheyne thinks of its destruction — probable but not proved — by the Persians, about 350 B.C., Marti, of its devastation by Antiochus in 170 B.C. These verses may easily have been added, to make the passage applicable to a later situation; and without them the poem reaches an artistic climax — *behold look* (64:9), pointing back to the beginning of the prayer, *look down from heaven, and behold* (63:15). This explanation, though not perhaps completely satisfactory, appears to be the most plausible, and has at least the merit of retaining the passage, as a whole, within the period of the rest of the prophecy.

63:7–14. These verses look wistfully back to Jehovah's goodness to Israel in the past, especially in the days of Moses.

7. **Make mention of**, *i.e.* gratefully celebrate. **Praises**, praiseworthy deeds. **Bestowed on**, wrought for. Read: *in accordance with all that Jehovah, (so) rich in goodness, has wrought for us.* Omit *toward the house of Israel;* and for **bestowed on them**, read *wrought for* **us** (so Gr.).

8 f. **For he said**: this carries us back to the origin of the people, whom Jehovah launched upon their national career with high hopes of their fidelity. **In all their affliction** should go with vs. 8; *so he became to them a saviour from all their distress* (so Gr.). **He was afflicted**, etc.: the Greek version supports another and practically certain translation of the Hebrew consonants — *it was no envoy or angel, but his* own *presence that saved them.* The presence, or *face*

And he bore them, and carried them
All the days of old.
10. But they rebelled, and grieved
His holy spirit:
Therefore he was turned to be their enemy,
And himself fought against them.
11. Then he remembered the days of old,
[1] Moses, *and* his people, *saying*,
"Where is he that [2] brought them up out of the sea
With the [3] shepherds of his flock?
Where is he that put his holy spirit
In the midst of them?
12. That caused his glorious arm to go
At the right hand of Moses?
That divided the water before them,

[1] Gr. om. this line. [2] Gr. *brought up from the sea the shepherd of the sheep.* [3] Some MSS. *shepherd.*

(cf. 59:2), of Jehovah, though not quite identical with himself, is a visible manifestation of him; and the meaning practically is that, **in the days of old**, *i.e.* the days of Moses, Jehovah came to save them in person, not by proxy.

10. **His holy spirit**, here conceived almost personally (note *grieved*) — the spirit of divine leadership and direction, manifested supremely through Moses, but also through others (Num. 11:16 f.).

11. **He**, *i.e.* Israel, **remembered**. Omit, with Gr., *Moses and his people*, words which were probably added to explain *shepherd* and *flock* respectively; in their place may originally have stood something like *the years of many generations* (cf. Deut. 32:7). The next sentence, which should read *Where is he that brought up* (so Gr.) *from the sea the shepherd of his flock?* (*i.e.* Moses), refers either to the divine protection of the infant Moses (in which case *the sea* = the Nile, cf. 18:2; 19:5), or to deliverance from the perils of the Red Sea. The **holy spirit** (cf. vs. 10) was present *in the midst of them* chiefly in the person of Moses.

12–14. **His glorious arm**, etc.: the reference is to the wonderful power with which Moses was endowed, symbolized by his rod (Exod. 17:9). **Divided the water** of the Red Sea, through whose

To make himself an everlasting name?
13. That led them through the depths,
As an horse in the wilderness,
That they stumbled not?
14. As the cattle that go down into the valley,
The spirit of the LORD [1] caused them to rest:
So didst thou lead thy people,
To make thyself a glorious name."

Passionate Entreaty for the Divine Forgiveness and Pity
(63 : 15–64 : 12)

15. Look down from heaven, and behold
From the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory:
Where is thy zeal and thy mighty acts?
The yearning of thy bowels and thy compassions
are restrained [2] toward me.
16. For thou art our father, though Abraham knoweth
us not,
And Israel doth not acknowledge us:

[1] Gr. *guided them.* [2] Gr. *from us.*

depths they walked as firmly *as a horse on the pasture-land*, and down whose banks (regarded as steep, like the Dead Sea) they wandered as securely *as the cattle that go down* from the uplands *to the valley* (this clause goes better with vs. 13), *the spirit of Jehovah guiding them* (rather than *caused them to rest*).

15 f. In the light of the divine leadership and love shown to the people in the old days of Moses (vss. 7–14) **where is thy zeal** now? Instead of *are restrained toward me*, read *do not refrain* (cf. 64 : 12). But this clause and the next, — *for thou art our father*, — which awkwardly anticipates the third clause of vs. 16, are probably later insertions. **Abraham** and **Israel**, *i.e.* Jacob, may have been regarded by the prophet's contemporaries as semi-divine, capable of sympathizing with and helping them in their distress. The prophet, in dispelling this illusion, indirectly reminds the people that their real help and redemption are to be

Thou, O LORD, art our father;
Our redeemer from everlasting is thy name.

17. O LORD, why dost thou make us to err from thy ways,
And hardenest our heart from thy fear?
Return for thy servants' sake,
[1]The tribes of thine inheritance.
18. [2]Thy holy people possessed it but a little while:
Our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.
19. [3]We are become as they over whom thou never barest rule:
As they that were not called by thy name.

64. [4]Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down,

[1] Gr. *for the sake of the tribes*, etc. [2] Gr. *that we may inherit a little of thy holy mountain.* [3] Gr. *we are become as of old, when thou didst not rule over us, neither was thy name called upon us.* [4] Gr. *if thou shouldst open the heaven, trembling at thee will take the mountains, and they shall melt as wax melts before fire, and fire shall burn up the adversaries, and thy name shall be manifest among the adversaries.*

found in their God, for he is their **Father**, *i.e.* the Father of the nation (cf. Exod. 4:22).

17. Before **the tribes**, insert, with Gr., *for the sake of*.

18. **Possessed** it: what? perhaps the sanctuary — but the word is unrepresented in the Hebrew, and the text may be doubted. Adopting two hints of the Greek version, we may translate: *but a little while have we had possession of thy holy hill* — *i.e.* the temple hill. The reference could not be to Solomon's temple, as that had stood for nearly four hundred years. Even if we suppose the *little while* to describe the seventy years between the building of the second temple and the probable date of this prophecy, we have no positive proof that that temple was destroyed, *trodden on*, during this period. These considerations lend some plausibility to the brilliant conjectural reading:

Why do the ungodly make light of thy holy place,
Our adversaries desecrate thy sanctuary?

and the reference would be to the Samaritan party with their adherents in Jerusalem and the neighborhood (so Marti).

19 f. The fortunes of the Jews have fallen so low that for long it has not seemed as if they were the subjects of such a king as

That the mountains might [1] flow down at thy presence;

2. As when fire kindleth the brushwood,
And the fire causeth the waters to boil:
To make thy name known to thine adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at thy presence!

3. When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for,
Thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4. For from of old men have not heard,

1 Cor. 2:9 Nor perceived by the ear,
Neither hath the eye seen
A God beside thee,
[2] Which worketh for him that waiteth for him.

5. [3] Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness,
Those that remember thee in thy ways:
Behold, thou wast wroth, and we sinned:
[4] In them *have we been* of long time, and shall we be saved?

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[1] m. SV *quake.* [2] Gr. *and thy works which thou wilt perform for those who wait for thy mercy.* [3] Gr. *For* these things *shall befall those who work righteousness, and they shall remember thy ways.* [4] Gr. *therefore we have erred;* m. AV *in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.*

Jehovah at all, and some divine intervention is necessary — a descent through the *rent heavens* which would make *the mountains quake* (see margin).

2. This verse describes the manner and the object of the theophany.

3, 4a. Omit *thou camest down . . . presence* (an erroneous repetition of the latter half of vs. 1), and read:

When thou didst terrible things (*i.e.* to the enemy) *which we looked not for,*
And whereof from of old men had not heard.

4b, 5. With hints from the Greek version, and conjectural

6. For we are all become as one that is unclean,
And all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment:
And we all do fade as a leaf;
And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
7. And there is none that calleth upon thy name,
That stirreth up himself to take hold of thee;
For thou hast hid thy face from us,
And hast [1] consumed us by means of our iniquities.

8. But now, O LORD, thou art our father;
We are the clay,
And thou our potter;
And we are all the work of thy hand.
9. Be not wroth very sore, O LORD,
Neither remember iniquity for ever:
Behold, look, we beseech thee,
We are all thy people.

[1] m. *melted;* Gr. Syr. Tar. *delivered us* into the hand of, etc.

emendation, this somewhat difficult passage may be provisionally rendered as follows:

Ear hath not heard,
Eye hath not seen,
Thy deeds and mighty acts which thou wilt do
For those who wait for thee.
Oh that thou would'st meet those who work righteousness,
Who remember thy ways (*i.e.*, thy commandments).
But, behold! thou wast wroth, and we sinned,
(*Wroth*) *at our deeds, and we became guilty.*

6 f. Everywhere is corruption and decay, and religion is as good as dead. **Hast consumed**, etc., read, with margin, *hast delivered us into the power of.*

8 f. Prayer for pity. **Father**, cf. 63:16. The **potter** will surely care for the **clay** which he has so skilfully and lovingly fashioned. **Behold, look** points back to 63:15, and perhaps originally closed the poem (see p. 396).

10. Thy holy cities are become a wilderness,
Zion is become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.
11. Our holy and our beautiful house,
Where our fathers praised thee,
Is burned with fire;
And all our pleasant things are laid waste.
12. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O LORD?
Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE FAITHFUL AND THE DOOM OF THE APOSTATES (65 : 1–66 : 24)

The Fate of the Apostates (65 : 1–7)

Rom. 10 : 20 f.

65. I [1]am inquired of by them that asked not *for me;*
I [1]am found of them that sought me not:
I said, "Behold me, behold me,"
Unto a nation that [2]was not called by my name.

2. I have spread out my hands all the day
Unto a rebellious [3]people,

[1] m. *was.* [2] Gr. Syr. Vg. Tar. *called not on.* [3] Gr. *and disobedient people.*

10–12. The historical setting of these verses is hard to determine; see p. 395. **Cities**, *i.e.* of Judah. The temple is the house of *praise*, as of prayer (56 : 7). **Pleasant things**, places with hallowed associations.

Chaps. 65 and 66. Earlier chapters (cf. 57) have revealed the Jewish community of the period as sharply divided into two classes — the strict legal party, representing generally the religious ideals and practices of the returned exiles, and the pro-Samaritan party, whose religion, perpetuating ancient superstitions and infected by the religions of the neighboring peoples, was of a distinctly pagan and degraded type. In the closing chapters of the book, the prophet vividly portrays the respective destinies in store for both these classes — for the one, long and happy life in a renovated world; for the other, a fearful and accursed doom.

1, 2. These verses describe the indifference of the **rebellious**

Which walketh in a way that is not good,
After their own thoughts;

3. A people that provoketh me
To my face continually,
Sacrificing in gardens,
And burning incense upon bricks;

4. [1] Which sit among the graves,
And lodge in the [2] secret places; [3]
Which eat swine's flesh,
And broth of abominable things is in their vessels;

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[1] Gr. *To the demons which do not exist.* [2] Gr. *caves.* [3] Gr. adds *for the sake of* securing *dreams.*

people — *i.e.* the Jews whose practices are described in vss. 3–5 — to the divine appeal. We may reasonably infer from these verses that the attitude of the stricter party was at first not so exclusive as it afterwards became; they had been forced into their exclusive policy by the refusal of their idolatrous and *rebellious* brethren to accept the stricter ideals they had sought to impose. The *outstretched hands* had been rejected.

I am inquired of . . .: *I allowed myself to be inquired of, i.e.* was ready to answer, *those who asked me* (so Gr.) *not*, and *to let myself be found*, etc. **A nation**, not a foreign nation, but the *rebellious* Jewish *people that did not call upon my name* (so Gr. and margin) — described in the following verses. **A rebellious people**: *an unruly and disobedient people* (so Gr. and Rom. 10:21), which refused to *walk in the good way* of the law.

3, 4. These verses afford an interesting glimpse into the religious usages which persisted even in post-exilic Judaism, and *provoked* Jehovah *to his face.* **Gardens**, sacred groves (cf. 1:29). **Bricks**, whether of roofs (cf. Zeph. 1:5) or altars; the allusion is very obscure, and may not impossibly be, by a change in the pointing, to some form of tree-worship.

4. The sitting **in the graves** was no doubt intended to secure an oracle from the dead, who were supposed, like the dead Samuel (1 Sam. 28), to have a knowledge of the future. Similarly they **lodged**, *i.e.* passed the night, **in secret places**, as Gr. correctly explains, *for the sake of* obtaining *dreams, i.e.* dream-oracles. They **eat swine's flesh** — forbidden by law (Deut. 14:8) — in

5. Which say, "Stand by thyself,
Come not near to me, for [1] I am holier than thou";
These are a smoke in my nose,
A fire that burneth all the day.

6. Behold, it is written before me:
I will not keep silence, [2] but will recompense,
Yea, I will recompense into their bosom,
7. [3] Your own iniquities, and the iniquities of [3] your fathers together,
Saith the LORD,

Which have burned incense upon the mountains,
And [4] blasphemed me upon the hills:
Therefore will I [5] first measure
Their work into their bosom.

The Destiny of the Faithful in the Impending Judgment
(65:8–12)

8. Thus saith the Lord,
As the new wine is found in the cluster,

[1] Gr. *I am pure.* [2] Gr. *till I have recompensed into,* etc. [3] Gr. Syr. *their.* [4] m. *defied.* [5] Gr. om.

mystic rites. **Abominable things**, probably unclean animals, like mice (cf. 66:17).

5. **I am holier than thou**: rather, *or else I shall sanctify thee.* Any one who ventures within the circle of the initiated during these strange and superstitious performances will be infected with the *holiness* of the whole group — holiness here being purely physical, not ethical, and practically = taboo. **These** idolaters provoke the anger of Jehovah, which will issue in smoke and flame.

6 f. **It**, *i.e.* the record of their sin, **is written** in the memorials of heaven. Transfer *yea, I will recompense* in vs. 6 (omitting *into their bosom*) to the end of vs. 7, after *work*. Read *their* iniquities and *their* fathers. **Mountains . . . hills**: the reference is to the illegitimate worship upon the high places. For **work** read *recompense. I will first measure their recompense and requite it* (see vs. 6) *into their bosom.*

And one saith, "Destroy it not,
For a blessing is in it":
So will I do for my [1]servants' sakes,
That I may not destroy them all.
9. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob,
And out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains:
And my chosen shall inherit it,
And my servants shall dwell there.
10. And Sharon shall be a [2]fold of flocks,
And the valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down in,
For my people that have sought me.
11. But ye that forsake the LORD,
That forget my holy mountain,
That prepare a table for [3]Fortune,
And that fill up mingled wine unto [4]Destiny;
12. I will destine you to the sword,
And ye shall all bow down to the slaughter:

[1] Gr. and some Heb. MSS. *servant's.* [2] m. *pasture.* [3] Heb. *Gad;* Gr. *the demon.* [4] Heb. *Meni;* Gr. *Fortune.*

8–10. Just as the *cluster* is not *destroyed*, if there be some good grapes upon it, so, for the sake of Jehovah's faithful servants, neither will the whole nation be exterminated. Throughout this chapter the faithful are frequently called **my servants**, and they are rewarded with secure possession of the **mountain** land of Palestine, in its length and breadth — from **Sharon**, the plain between Carmel and Joppa, to the **valley of Achor** near Jericho. Probably the last sentence of vs. 10, which is metrically superfluous, is a later insertion.

11, 12. In contrast with this happy destiny of the faithful will be the bloody doom of the idolaters who **forget my holy mountain**, ignoring the exclusive claims of Jerusalem, and worshipping elsewhere (vss. 3f.). **Fortune** (*Gad*) and **Destiny** (*Meni*) were West-Semitic deities, in whose cult these apostate Jews participated. Tables were spread for the gods (cf. 1 Cor. 10: 21), with bread (cf. Exod. 25: 30) and wine in accordance with a fashion common

Because when I called, ye did not answer;
When I spake, ye did not hear;
But ye did that which was evil in mine eyes,
And chose that wherein I delighted not.

The Great Contrast (65 : 13–16)

13. Therefore thus saith
The Lord GOD,
Behold, my servants shall eat,
But ye shall be hungry:

Behold, my servants shall drink,
But ye shall be thirsty:
Behold, my servants shall rejoice,
But ye shall be ashamed:

14. Behold, my servants shall sing
For joy of heart,
But ye shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And shall howl for [1] vexation of spirit.

15. And ye shall leave your name
For [2] a curse unto my chosen,

[1] Heb. *breaking.* [2] Heb. *an oath;* Gr. *satiety* (loathing?).

in the ancient world. The last sentence of vs. 12, *but ye did . . . not*, has probably been inserted from 66 : 4.

This deliberate worship of foreign gods, coupled with the practice of necromancy and the other mystic, superstitious, and illegal rites alluded to in vss. 3 f., sheds a very lurid light on the religious conditions which Ezra, Nehemiah, and the reforming party had to face, and goes a long way to justify their severe and exclusive policy.

13 f. The fourfold contrast beginning **Behold, my servants**, is very impressive. **Ye**, apostates, whose conduct has just been described.

15. **A curse**, *i.e.* a formula of imprecation, a specimen of which

And the Lord GOD shall slay [1] thee;
And he shall call his servants
By another name:

16. So that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself
In the God of truth;
And he that sweareth in the earth shall swear
By the God of truth;

Because the former troubles are forgotten,
And because they are hid from mine eyes.

The Glorious Future (65:17–25)

17. For, behold, I create new heavens
And a new earth:

2 Pet. 3:13
Rev. 21:1

And the former things shall not be remembered,
Nor come into mind.

Rev. 21:4

18. But [2] be ye glad and rejoice for ever
In that which I create.

For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing,
And her people a joy.

[1] Gr. *you.* [2] Gr. *they shall find gladness and rejoicing in her.*

is given in the next clause (read *May the Lord Jehovah slay thee*). **Another name**, corresponding to their high blessedness.

16. The meaning is that Jehovah will have shown himself to be a **God of truth**, *i.e.* of faithfulness, fulfilling alike his promises and threats, so that *he who invokes a blessing for himself in the land shall invoke it by the god of truth; i.e.* shall say; "May the God of truth bless me."

17 f. **New heavens and a new earth**, *i.e.* a new universe; and this will be the guarantee that **the former things**, *i.e.* troubles (vs. 16), will be remembered no more. **Be ye glad** should be *they shall be glad.*

19. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in my people.

Rev. 21 : 4 And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.

20. There shall be no more thence
An infant of days,

Nor an old man that hath not filled
His days :
For the child shall die an hundred years old,
And the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

21. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ;
And they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22. They shall not build, and another inhabit ;
They shall not plant, and another eat :

For as the days of [1] a tree shall be the days of my people,
And my chosen shall [2] long enjoy the work of their hands.

[1] Gr. Tar. *the tree of life.* [2] Heb. *wear out.*

20. Human life shall be prolonged to an age that will recall the patriarchal days. **Infant of** a few **days**. For **the child**, read *the youngest:* a hundred years would be a short life. **The sinner** (omit being *an hundred years*) **shall be accursed**, *i.e.* cut off by the curse. In those days there will be no sinners : *the people shall be all righteous* (60 : 21).

21 f. Those days would be marked by material prosperity and security; and, human life being so long, men would enjoy the fruits of their toil.

23. They shall not labour in vain,
Nor bring forth for [1] calamity;

For they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring [2] with them.
24. And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer;
And while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox:
And dust shall be the serpent's meat.
They shall not hurt nor destroy
In all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

Doom pronounced upon those who purpose to Build a Rival Temple (66 : 1–4)

66. Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne,
And the earth is my footstool: Mat. 5: 34 f. Acts 7: 49
[3] What manner of house will ye build unto me?
[4] And what place shall be my rest?

[1] m. *sudden terror.* [2] m. shall be *with them.* [3] AV *where* is *the house,* etc. [4] AV *where* is *the place,* etc.

23. **Bring forth** children **for calamity**, *i.e.* sudden destruction. Life being so long, many generations of **their offspring** would be **with them** (see margin).

24 f. Prayer will be instantly answered, prosperity will everywhere reign, and even in the animal world there will be peace (cf. 11 : 6–8). Omit *and dust shall be the serpent's meat,* a clause added to show that the serpent was not to be exempted from its ancient curse (Gen. 3 : 14).

66 : 1–4. The schismatic Jews — "rebels against Jehovah," as they are called in vs. 24 — whose conduct was so vividly portrayed in the preceding chapter (65 : 3–5, 11), as also in this (66 : 3, 17 f.), appear to have cherished the design of building a rival temple to that of Jerusalem — a design later accomplished by the Samaritans

2. For all these things hath mine hand made,
[1]And *so* all these things came to be, saith the LORD:
But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor
And of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.

3. He that killeth an ox is as he that slayeth a man;
He that sacrificeth a lamb, as he that breaketh a dog's neck;
He that offereth [2]an oblation, *as he that offereth* swine's blood;
He that [3]burneth frankincense, as he that blesseth an idol.

[1] Gr. Syr. *all these things are mine.* [2] m. *meal offering.* [3] Heb. *maketh a memorial of.*

on mount Gerizim. This section embodies the prophet's protest. The striking language of the first two verses might easily and naturally be interpreted as a challenge to all sacred buildings, and a plea for a purely spiritual worship (cf. Jn. 4:21); the infinite God needs no house made with hands, therefore not even the Jerusalem temple. But other verses of the chapter show that the temple is not only respected, but is presupposed, with its ritual and its officers, as an eternal element in the Jerusalem of the regenerated world (66:6, 20–23). The passage can therefore only be interpreted as a protest against the proposed schismatic temple.

1. **The earth is my footstool**: in particular the Jerusalem sanctuary was the "place of his feet" (60:13), and no other *house* for him could be tolerated.

2. **Poor**, *afflicted*; **contrite**, *crushed;* **my word**, the law. This clause describes the strict Jews, who respect the law and worship at the temple.

3 f. Render:

He who slaughters an ox is also *the slayer of a man,*
He who sacrifices a sheep is also *the strangler of dogs,*
He who brings an oblation is also one who pours out *swine's blood,*
He who offers memorial incense is also *one who blesses idols:*
As these have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delights in their abominations,
So will I also choose wanton insults for them,
And bring what they dread upon them.

Yea, they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delighteth in their abominations;
4. I also will choose their [1]delusions,
And will bring their fears upon them;

Because when I called, none did answer;
When I spake, they did not hear:
But they did that which was evil in mine eyes,
And chose that wherein I delighted not.

The Faithful Cheered by the Promise of Zion's Prosperity
(66:5–14)

5. Hear the word of the LORD,
Ye that tremble at his word:
Your brethren that hate you,
That cast you out for my name's sake, have said,
"Let the LORD be glorified,
That we may see your joy";
But they shall be ashamed.
6. A voice of tumult from the city,
A voice from the temple, Rev. 16:1

[1] m. *mockings.*

The meaning is that their affected worship of Jehovah goes hand in hand with rank idolatry; the men who offer — legitimately enough — oxen, sheep, and meal offerings with incense (cf. Lev. 2:2) are guilty of human sacrifice, and of participation in idolatrous and abominable rites which involved the recognition of the sacredness of the dog and the swine (cf. 65:4). **when I called**, etc.: cf. 65:12.

5. **Tremble**, etc.; cf. vs. 2. **Your brethren**, the idolatrous Jews of vs. 3. **For my name's sake**: the hostility was religious in its origin. These apostates mock the hopes of their pious "brethren," and their words are sarcastic, *Let Jehovah manifest his glory*, etc.

6. Jehovah hears their sarcastic challenge, and *renders* them

A voice of the LORD that rendereth
Recompence to his enemies.

7. Before she travailed,
She brought forth;
Before her pain came,
She was delivered of a man child.
8. Who hath heard such a thing?
Who hath seen such things?
Shall a land be born
In one day?
Shall a nation be brought forth
At once?
For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth
Her children.

9. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?
Saith the LORD:
Shall I that cause to bring forth shut *the womb?*
Saith thy God.
10. [1] Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
All ye that love her:

[1] Gr. *rejoice, O Jerusalem, and hold in her a festal assembly all ye who love her.*

fearful *recompense.* *Hark! a tumult from the city* — "the city where they had mockingly cried for God's glory to appear" (G. A. Smith) — *hark! from the temple: hark! it is Jehovah* himself issuing forth to punish his enemies.

7–9. These verses describe the speedy and miraculous increase of Zion, no doubt through the return of her scattered children (49: 17–21) — a picture that appropriately follows the destruction of her enemies.

She (vs. 7), Zion. For **a land** (vs. 8) read *the people of a land.* Vs. 9 means that the great work of restoration would assuredly be brought to complete fruition.

10 f. Read *Rejoice, Jerusalem.* For **that ye may milk out,** etc.,

Rejoice for joy with her,
All ye that mourn over her:
11. That ye may suck and be satisfied
With the breasts of her consolations;
That ye milk out, and be delighted
With the abundance of her glory.
12. For thus saith the LORD,
Behold, I will extend
Peace to her like a river,
And the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream,
[1] And ye shall suck *thereof;* ye shall be borne upon the side,
And shall be dandled upon the knees.
13. As one whom his mother comforteth,
So will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
14. And ye shall see *it*, and your heart shall rejoice,
And your bones shall flourish like the tender grass:
And the hand of the LORD shall be known toward his servants,
And he will have indignation against his enemies.

[1] Gr. *their children shall be borne upon the shoulders.*

read, *that ye may drain with delight her rich mother-bosom.* As a mother her sucking child, so one day would Zion soothe and comfort her faithful children.

12. Here, as in 60:5; 61:6, the resources of the Gentiles are to be made contributory to the welfare of Israel. **Peace**, almost = prosperity. **Like a river**, cf. 48:18. For **and ye shall suck**, etc., read, with Gr., *and your children shall be borne upon the side, i.e.* of the Gentiles (cf. 49:22; 60:4), *and dandled upon their knees.*

13. **Whom his mother comforteth**: a fine glimpse into Hebrew family life.

14. **Your bones shall flourish**, etc.: this figure for the recovery

The Judgment (66 : 15–18a)

15. For, behold, the LORD will come [1]with fire,
And his chariots shall be like the whirlwind;
To render his anger with fury,
And his rebuke with flames of fire.

16. For [2]by fire will the LORD plead,
And by his sword, with all flesh:
And the slain of the LORD shall be many.
17. They that sanctify themselves and purify themselves
To go unto the gardens, [3]behind one in the midst,

[1] m. *in;* Gr. *as.* [2] Gr. *with the fire of the Lord shall all the earth be judged and with his sword all flesh.* [3] Gr. om. this clause. A Heb. variant reads *one* in the feminine. Syr. Tar. and two Greek versions *one after another.*

of strength, joy, beauty, may seem forced to us, but not to the Oriental, who frequently mentions the bones when alluding to the welfare of the body (cf. Ps. 32 : 3). For **hand**, perhaps *loving-kindness.*

66 : 15–18a. The judgment, announced in the last clause of vs. 14, is here elaborated. It is to be universal —upon *all flesh* (vs. 16) — but more particularly will it fall upon the idolatrous Jews (vs. 17).

15. **With**, or rather *in* **fire** (cf. Deut. 5 : 22 f.): Gr. has *like* fire. **Whirlwind**: Jehovah rides on the storm-cloud (Hab. 3 : 8).

16. **Plead**, *enter into judgment.* **And the slain**, etc.: this clause, which is metrically superfluous, should perhaps be deleted. It may have been suggested by Jer. 25 : 33; Zeph. 2 : 12, and added to indicate the deadly effect of the divine judgment.

17. The judgment which falls upon all Jehovah's enemies, singles out especially the Jewish apostates, who *sanctify and purify themselves for* the unlawful rites celebrated in *the gardens* (cf. 65 : 3; 1 : 29), and partake of sacrificial meals involving the recognition of the swine (cf. vs. 3), the mouse, and vermin (lit. *swarming creatures,* as we should read, rather than **abomination**) as sacred animals. Cf. the somewhat similar description in 65 : 3 f. These rites were performed **behind one in the midst**, — that is, the members of the group taking their cue from the leader, who "stood in the midst of them" (cf. Ezek. 8 : 11), and regulated the ceremony

Eating swine's flesh,
And the abomination, and the mouse;
They shall come to an end together, saith the LORD.
18. For I *know* their works and their thoughts.

Jehovah's Glory announced throughout the World: the Complete Restoration and Perpetuity of Israel (66 : 18b–22)

[1] *The time* cometh, that I will gather
All nations and tongues;
And they shall come, and shall see my glory.
19. And I will set a sign among them,

And I will send such as escape of them
Unto the nations, to Tarshish, [2] Pul and Lud, [3] that draw the bow, to Tubal and [4] Javan,

[1] Gr. *I am coming to gather.* [2] Gr. *Put.* [3] Gr. *Meshech.* [4] Gr. *Greece.*

of purification. In vs. 18, the words *know* and *the time* are unrepresented in the Hebrew; Duhm happily suggests that **their works and their thoughts** (*i.e.* their idolatry and their hostility to the faithful) really belong to vs. 17; thus — the idolaters, who eat swine's flesh, etc., they, *their works and their thoughts, shall come to an end together, saith Jehovah.*

66 : 18b–22. The nations are gathered together for judgment. Those who survive go to the ends of the earth to declare Jehovah's power and glory. Moved by the message, the distant peoples among whom the Jews have been dispersed bring them back voluntarily to Jerusalem, where some of them are appointed to the office of priest; and the assurance is given that the Jewish name and race will be eternal.

18. After the transference of *their words and their thoughts* to vs. 17, we are justified in rendering vs. 18 as follows: *and I am coming to gather all nations*, etc., *i.e.* for judgment. The **glory** which they are to see (Exod. 14 : 4), and the **sign** which is to be set among them (Exod. 10 : 2), is apparently some mighty act of judgment.

19. The survivors are to be sent throughout the world to declare Jehovah's glory, thus manifested in judgment. There is little

To the isles afar off,
That have not heard my [1]fame,
Neither have seen my glory.

And they shall declare my glory among the nations.
20. And they shall bring all your brethren out of all
the nations
For an offering unto the LORD,
Upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and
upon mules, and upon [2]swift beasts, to my holy
mountain,
Jerusalem, saith the LORD,

As the children of Israel bring their offering
In a clean vessel into the house of the LORD.
21. And of them also will I take
[3]For priests *and* for Levites, saith the LORD.

2 Pet. 3 : 13 Rev. 21 : 1
22. For as the new heavens
And the new earth, which I will make,

[1] Gr. *name.* [2] m. SV *dromedaries.* [3] Heb. *for priests, for Levites;* all the versions and some Heb. MSS. *for priests and for Levites.*

doubt, however, that the names of the countries to which they go are later insertions (based upon Ezek. 29 : 10, 12 f.; 38 : 2; 39 : 1). **Tarshish**, in Spain; **Put** (rather than *Pul*) and **Lud** in north Africa; **Meshech** and **Rosh** (as we should probably read for *that draw the bow;* cf. Gr.) and **Tubal**, in northeastern Asia Minor; **Javan**, Greece.

20. **Your brethren**: the Jews scattered in those distant foreign lands are to be restored to Jerusalem by the heathen themselves, who present them gratefully as an *offering to Jehovah.* The clause describing the means of transport — *upon horses . . . swift beasts* — interrupts the metre and is apparently an interpolation.

21. Some **of them**, *i.e.* of the restored Jews, would be made *Levitical priests* (as we should probably read instead of *priests and Levites*). The temple will be a permanent feature of the new Jerusalem (vs. 23), and it will need its sacrifices (60 : 7) and priests.

Shall remain before me, saith the LORD,
So shall your seed and your name remain.

The Fearful Fate of the Apostates (66 : 23 f.)

23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another,
And from one sabbath to another,
Shall all flesh come to worship
Before me, saith the LORD.
24. And they shall go forth, and look
Upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me:
For their worm shall not die, Mk. 9 : 48
Neither shall their fire be quenched;
And they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

22. The Jewish race and name will be as eternal as the new heavens and the new earth.

23. **All flesh**: probably all (faithful) *Jews*, as in Joel 2 : 28. A weekly or monthly pilgrimage to Jerusalem from the ends of the earth is manifestly impossible.

24. It is no doubt in the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, the earthly antitype of Gehenna (hell), that the faithful are to be conceived as going out to view the burning carcases of their apostate brethren, whose torment appears to be regarded as eternal. The carcases are *an object of abhorrence* to all flesh, but, in accordance with the general temper of the Old Testament, the faithful no doubt look upon them with a certain satisfaction, finding in them a vivid confirmation of their sorely tried faith in the divine government of the world (cf. Mal. 3 : 18). "It is sad," remarks Duhm, "that the book which contains much of what is most glorious, exalted, significant, and pious in the Old Testament, should now end with such a demonic discord." There is much to suggest that the passage is later than its context — perhaps indeed very late.

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